Misuari opposes trial in Metro Manila

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2002 ★ 34 PAGES 2 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 33 ₱15

KAMPANYA NA BA RAW ITO? PAKI-ISPLIKA NGA!

Roco posters teachers' pet peeve

By J. L. Javellana

MOVE over Piolo Pascual, Education Secretary Raul Roco may soon be the country's poster boy.

ROCO/ A12

Malacañang, Danding strike deal on SMC

By Dona Pazzibugan

AN "INTERIM agreement" on San Miguel Corp. has been reached by Malacañang and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., which provides that the five nominees of deposed President Joseph Estrada to the board of directors will peacefully yield to President Macapagal-Arroyo's nominees.

MALACAÑANG/ A13

FVR men hit GMA for lack of governance

Sin calls on critics to give gov't a chance

ARRIVAL honors on Wednesday for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Palace grounds escorted by President Macapagal, Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo. EDWIN BACASMAS

By Carlito Pablo
and Armand Nocum

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday drew more criticism for her alleged excessive focus on the 2004 election, this time from the retired Army chief who first called for the withdrawal of military support from then President Joseph Estrada.

"She's neglecting governance," Fortunato Abat, chair of the Federation of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (or Forces), said in a phone interview. "The President may say she's doing well but the emphasis of her movements is toward 2004. The best things she should have are accomplishments, and not just court the people."

Abat said that while the government had reported rosy figures of economic growth and tamed inflation, "have these been felt by the ordinary people, or are these in the newspapers only?"

"The people are wiser now," he pointed out. "It's the solid deeds you deliver that count, (and not) just talking about it and going around the country."

Even Jaime Cardinal Sin yesterday conceded that "the people are tired" and that the state of the Macapagal administration "is far from ideal."

FVR/ A12

"VIVA El Señor Nazareno," chant the all-male devotees of the Black Nazarene estimated at over 150,000-strong who follow the wooden image of Christ bearing the cross during its annual procession in Quiapo. *(Story on Page A17.)* ERIK ARAZAS

Koizumi proposes alliance with Asean

JAPANESE Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, kicking off a weeklong tour of Southeast Asia with an overnight visit to Manila, yesterday proposed to form a comprehensive economic alliance with the Philippines and other Asean members.

A Japanese official said Koizumi made the proposal during talks with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

"I would like to propose a Japan-Asean comprehensive economic alliance initiative, which aims to strengthen economic links on broad issues," the official quoted Koizumi as telling Ms Macapagal.

"I would like to seek an agreement on the plan during a meeting with Asean leaders," the Japanese premier said without setting any date or deadline.

Koizumi is visiting four other key members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

The Japanese official said Ms

KOIZUMI/ A12

EDSA I, II

No-frills rites planned but anti-coup force ready

By Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it was preparing a no-frills commemoration of People Power I and II, but it has also put the big guns on standby to quell any destabilization attempt that might be timed with the twin anniversaries.

"The celebration of Edsa I and II will be a solemn one befitting the ethos of this administration as a hardworking and no-nonsense government," President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said at his regular briefing.

He said the President had ordered the holding of celebrations and Masses in urban poor areas instead of the usual street party at the Edsa Shrine.

In a radio interview, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said that the government expected protest actions, and that "there are quarters which have an agenda to sow disorder."

"We have Task Force Libra, which is ready to secure our vital installations," Golez said of the government's anti-coup contingent. "The Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are ready to contain those who are planning to cause chaos."

An elite military composite force with armor and air warfare assets, Task Force Libra was formed in April 2001 before the arrest of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Headed by a brigadier general, it is solely dedicated to putting down threats to topple the Macapagal administration.

It was the same force that crushed the so-called "Edsa Tres" uprising of Estrada support-

NO-FRILLS/ A12

Chief Erap guard fired over lavish holiday bash

By TJ Burgonio

A POLICE official was relieved for allowing indicted former President Joseph Estrada to hold a lavish Christmas party in his detention center that enabled him to issue a scathing statement against the Macapagal administration.

Estrada lost not only his lenient guards but also certain privileges, including his use of a mobile phone.

Relieved was Chief Supt. Danilo Flores, head of the PNP Security and Protection Office (PSPO), along with at least four PSPO personnel. They were promptly replaced with a new security detail.

"This was not the first time this happened. There had been previous instances wherein the security escorts allowed unauthorized interviews of Estrada," said Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit, PNP spokesperson.

The Estradas are being detained at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) in Quezon City while undergoing trial for plunder at the Sandiganbayan.

Officials said the Christmas party featured a raffle at which the

CHIEF/ A12

The rise and fall of the man they call 'Ma-as'

By Noralyn Mustafa
PDI Mindanao Bureau

JOLO, Sulu—Even before they gathered in Manila in the last few days of April last year, the man whom they had come to address as "Ma-as" somehow came to know of the "plot" of his top cadres to oust him as chair of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Hastily, Nur Misuari convened a "4th Bangsamoro People's National Congress" in Zamboanga City on April 29, a day after 28 members of the MNLF Central Committee issued a resolution removing him as chair of the erstwhile separatist movement and of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD).

At the end of that congress the following day, the delegates, the youth representatives ostensibly, issued a resolution abandoning autonomy and asserting "the right of the Bangsamoro people to self-determination and independence."

Nobody took it, or Misuari, seriously.

Since the MNLF and the government signed the Jakarta Accord or the peace agreement on Sept. 2, 1996, Misuari had threatened to renew his bid for independence, or "going to war," whenever he perceived the government had "violated" the pact.

This time, he was ignored, and for many observers, it seemed the beginning of the end of his 33-year leadership of the movement that was supposed to liberate the Muslims from the "oppression" of "Philippine colonialism."

By Misuari's own account, the MNLF was formed in 1968, its birth triggered by the infamous "Jabidah Massacre" when over 60 Tausug and Sama youths staged a mutiny and were killed on Corregidor Island by their training officers. They had been recruited for a top secret military training program known as

THE RISE/ A13

Second FRONT PAGE

PAÑO NA NGAYON YAN?

Local folk want Nur out

STA. ROSA, Laguna—Residents of the Laguna town and village where Moro leader Nur Misuari is being detained have petitioned their mayor here to help in getting Misuari removed from Fort Sto. Domingo in the face of threats that his armed followers could launch an attempt to spring him ahead of his trial for rebellion.

Residents of Sta. Rosa town, adding their voice to that of villagers of Sto. Domingo, trooped to the office of Sta. Rosa Mayor Leon Arcillas yesterday to air their concern for the peace and safety of their homes.

Residents of Barangay Sto. Domingo signed a petition the other day for the removal of Misuari from their village.

The commanding officer of the military's Southern Luzon Command, however, dismissed the alleged threat from Misuari's armed followers.

"These are all speculations. These are all very remote," said Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, Solcom commander.

Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta, however, did not rule out the possibility that Misuari's followers may have already entered Metro Manila.

"There is always a possibility (of Misuari supporters storming the prison) and we are still monitoring all of this," Mabanta said.

In Cotabato City, Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on Mindanao affairs, warned supporters of Misuari not to put the law into their hands.

Dureza said the government will not stop Misuari loyalists from holding indignation rallies or protest marches provided "these activities are within the bounds of law and done peacefully." ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AFP***

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Misuari bucks trial in Metro

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC
AND JULIET L. JAVELLANA

DETAINED Moro leader Nur Misuari yesterday opposed a justice department move to have him tried in Metro Manila and insisted to the Supreme Court that the trial should be held in his home turf, Jolo in Sulu province.

In another defiant move, Misuari is reported to have written President Macapagal-Arroyo of his intention to "reassume immediately" the governorship of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Parouk Hussin, a rival of Misuari in the Moro National Liberation Front, won the Nov. 26 elections for ARMM governor.

Misuari, the ARMM's first governor, is being detained and accused of fomenting a short-lived rebellion in a futile attempt to stop the elections.

MISUARI

Misuari insists that he is still governor and that Hussin's election was illegal, said Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen who visited Misuari at his detention cell in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The letter to the President was sent to Malacañang "a few hours ago," Salvador Panelo, one of Misuari's lawyers who was with Dilangalen, said.

"I don't know how Malacañang will respond but if they will not follow the law, there will be a problem," Dilangalen said.

In his letter to Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Misuari professed innocence and demanded that his trial be conducted by Branch 3 of the Regional Trial Court of Jolo where the rebellion charges were filed against him on Jan. 3.

Besides insisting that he be tried in Jolo, Misuari made four other demands: free access to media; a complete medical checkup, to last for 2 days, at the Makati Medical Center; tents for his visitors; and a laptop computer.

Misuari said he was never informed "by the service of a subpoena, or copy of a complaint or information, or warrant of arrest issued by a competent court" of the charges filed against him.

He said holding the trial in Jolo "would save the government as well as the defense (panel) time and resources… and will be convenient to all concerned including the alleged witnesses."

He said it would also enable the government to demonstrate the stability and control "it claims to possess over the entire Philippine territory, including Sulu and other ARMM areas."

Misuari was assisted in drafting his letter to the SC by lawyers Macapanton Abbas Jr. and Arthur Lim, a former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez asked the SC the other day for a transfer of trial venue because of the security risks posed by Misuari's armed followers in Jolo.

He proposed that the Misuari trial be held inside the Fort Sto. Domingo facility in Silang, Cavite, where he is being detained.

Perez met with Davide yesterday to get an assurance that the high court would act on his petition.

He said Davide had assured him that the petition would be calendared today so it can be discussed by the full court when it resumes its sessions next week.

Perez has also asked the SC to designate a Laguna judge to handle the case.

He ruled out a live coverage for the Misuari trial, saying the high court ruling on the petition for live coverage of the trial of jailed ex-president Joseph Estrada also applied in Misuari's case.

Dilangalen said Misuari's basis for wanting to reclaim the ARMM post had legal basis.

Under Republic Act 9054, the organic act that created ARMM, the newly elected ARMM officials are not supposed to assume their posts until September, he said.

Misuari is being represented by panel composed of seven lawyers and 26 volunteer lawyers, Panelo said.

Several cases were already being prepared to quash the rebellion case and to obtain Misuari's immediate release from detention, he said.

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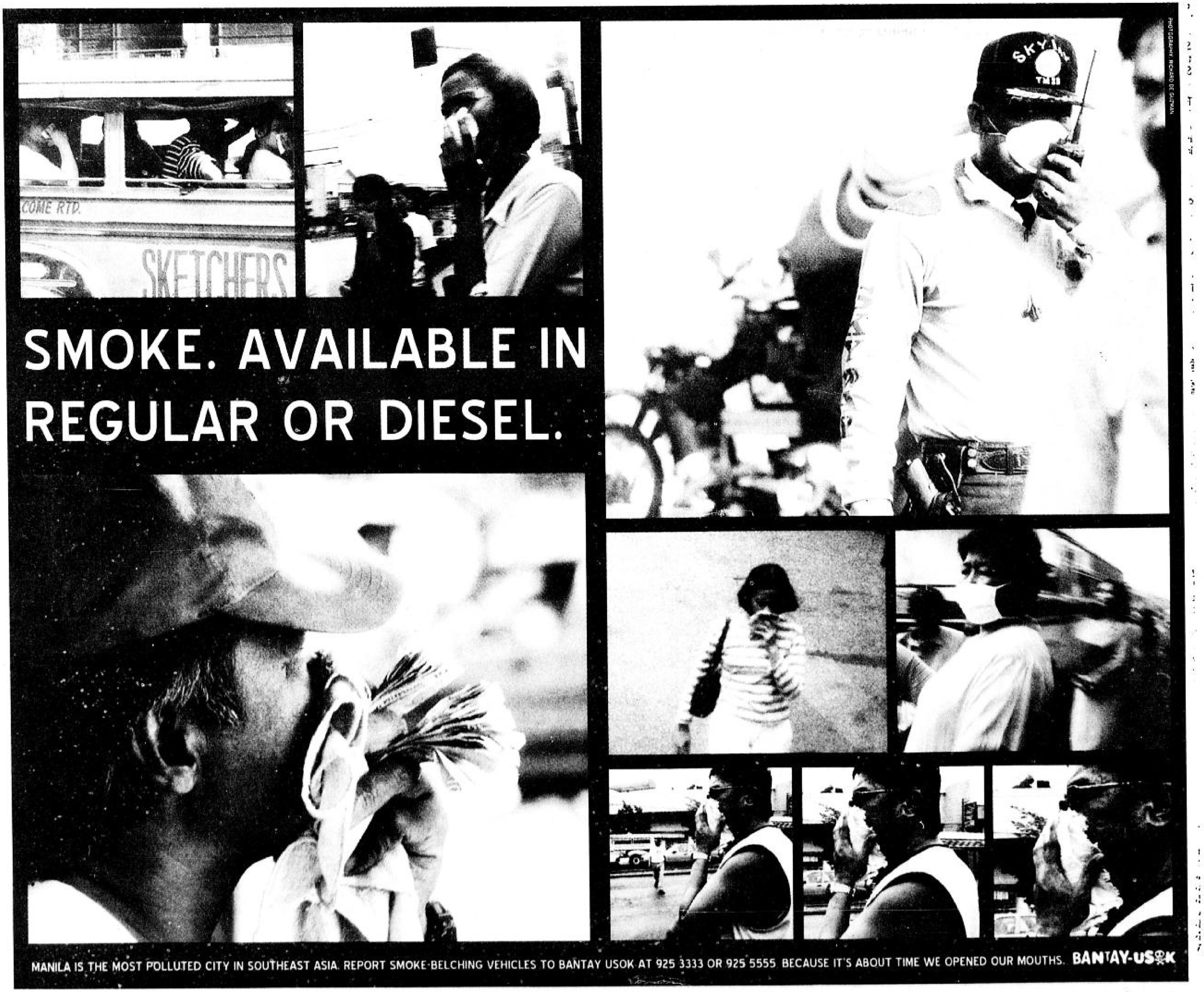
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Atong Ang seeks political asylum in US

LAS VEGAS—Former Philippine presidential adviser Charlie "Atong" Ang, who faces charges of plunder in his home country, is seeking political asylum in Las Vegas, his lawyer said.

Ang's lawyer, Donald Etra, said Tuesday that his client fled the Philippines because of death threats, not to avoid prosecution.

"Mr. Ang's goal is to remain in the United States and not to flee anywhere else," Etra said by telephone from his Los Angeles office. "Charlie fears for his life if he goes back to the Philippines. Asylum is his only option."

Etra said in a statement that he mailed an asylum application to the Immigration and Naturalization office in Anaheim, California on Tuesday.

But Maria Lourdes Montero, an official at the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, said her country wants Ang to return to face charges of plunder, or the theft of public funds.

In Manila, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said the government would block Ang's application for asylum.

"If it is true that Ang indeed filed it, the Department of Justice will vehemently oppose it," Perez said. He described the asylum application as a futile exercise.

Ang, 43, could be sentenced to death for the charges, which include funneling tobacco tax kickbacks and illegal payoffs from gambling to former President Joseph Estrada, who was ousted a year ago amid accusations of corruption and misrule.

Ang held no elected position in the Philippines, but was a friend to Estrada and consultant to the state-owned Philippine Gaming Corp. *AP*

NEWSBRIEFS

2 NPA rebs slain in clash

TWO communist rebels were killed and two soldiers wounded in a four-hour gun battle in Pangasinan, the Army said yesterday.

The clash occurred in a village in Umingan town Tuesday army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta said.

Troops also recovered assault rifles and ammunition as well as jungle packs containing documents left behind by fleeing rebels from the New People's Army, he added.

The Army has been ordered to intensify operations against the NPA in the north following reports they have intensified their recruitment drive and were extorting illegal "revolutionary taxes" from villagers, officials said.

The clash came two days after a Christmas truce expired this week.

100 US advisers due

MORE than 100 American advisers will be arriving in the country to train Filipino soldiers in the anti-terror campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, the military said yesterday.

Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, the military spokesperson, said the bulk of the American trainors would be arriving in February. The training will be held in a camp to be put up in Zamboanga City and will cover several areas like night-flying, psychological warfare, equipment maintenance, and other subjects that would be decided upon by the military higher-ups.

The 15-member European Commission, meanwhile, expressed support for the US plan to extend its anti-terrorist campaign from Afghanistan to other countries where international terrorist threats exist such as the Philippines. The EU was reacting to the announcement of US Defense Undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz that the next phase of Washington's war on terrorism would focus on keeping terrorists out of places like the Philippines, Somalia, Indonesia and Yemen.

'Buy Pinoy' forum tomorrow

THE COUNTRY'S biggest business organizations will launch tomorrow a "Buy Pinoy" Policy Forum Series aimed at "strengthening the national consensus to patronize Filipino products and services."

The policy forum, set to start at 10 a.m. at the Wack Wack Golf Clubhouse in Mandaluyong City, will focus on the movement's battle cry: "Buy Pinoy, Save Jobs."

The broad-based Buy Pinoy Movement forged on Dec. 11 a "Covenant for National Economic Survival and Prosperity," citing the difficult situation faced by the country in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the global economic slump.

Maligalig now a suspect

POLICE yesterday named retired Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig a suspect in connection with the killing of Baron Alexander Cervantes.

Maligalig and other police and military officers, who have been linked to the killing, would be "treated as suspects," said Supt. Eric Velasquez, chief of the intelligence and investigation division of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Maligalig yesterday welcomed this development, saying it would allow him to clear his name and contribute in the investigation.

Aside from Maligalig, police have also summoned Supt. Diosdado Valeroso, retired Col. Romeo Lim, Supt. Rafael Cardeno, and retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina to shed light on the Cervantes investigation.

AFP sets fireworks for media

THE BOMBS recovered from Navy officer Lt. Donn Anthony Miraflor will be detonated before media observers to demonstrate their destructive capability, the military said yesterday.

Military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said the explosives demonstration would be done either today or tomorrow in Ternate, Cavite, where a "structure" is already being prepared.

"We wanted to do it in Metro Manila but it would be too powerful... the explosion will rattle buildings and destroy glass windows, so we'll go out of town..." Adan said.

Asked why the decision was made to show off the bombs' explosive capability, Adan said: "To show you."

Adan said the demonstration would use only a portion of the bombs taken from Miraflor as these would be used as evidence in the case against him.

Miraflor was arrested on Dec. 28 in Sangley Point, Cavite, after about 100 blocks of C-4 explosives and blasting caps were recovered from men serving under him in the Navy's elite Special Warfare Group's Special Reaction Unit.

Martin P. Marfil

Pinay fined for abortion pills' sale

SINGAPORE—A Filipino maid was fined 9,000 Singapore dollars ($4,891) after pleading guilty to illegally selling prescription pills to induce abortions, the Straits Times reported Wednesday.

Norma Ileno Cortez, a 45-year-old mother of six, on Tuesday admitted in court she sold the Cytotec drugs to Roslan Osman, whose Indonesian girlfriend working as a maid here was pregnant.

Cytotec is usually taken to prevent gastric ulcers but it is known to induce miscarriage depending on the dosage consumed and the stage of the pregnancy.

Cortez sold him the drugs twice last year at a popular shopping center where she is well known for peddling the pills.

Police arrested her at the shopping center with 30 Cytotec tablets in her handbag.

Both Roslan and his girlfriend are serving jail terms after the latter delivered a dead male fetus, which subsequently led to Cortez's arrest. *AFP*

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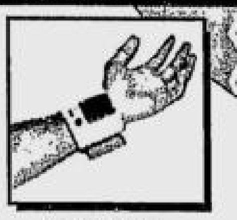
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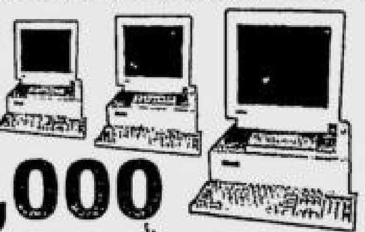
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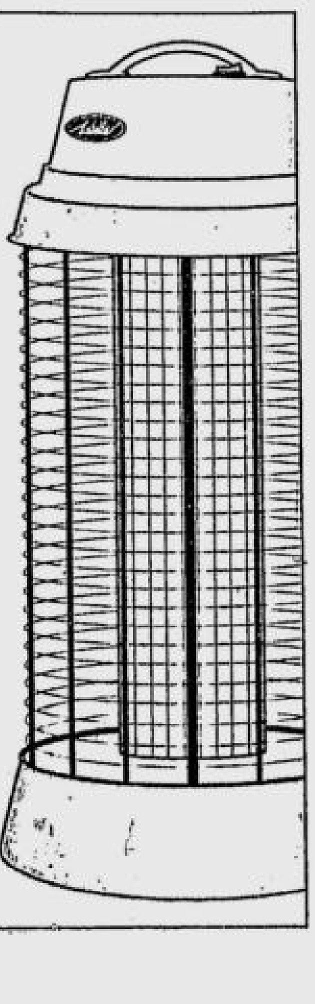
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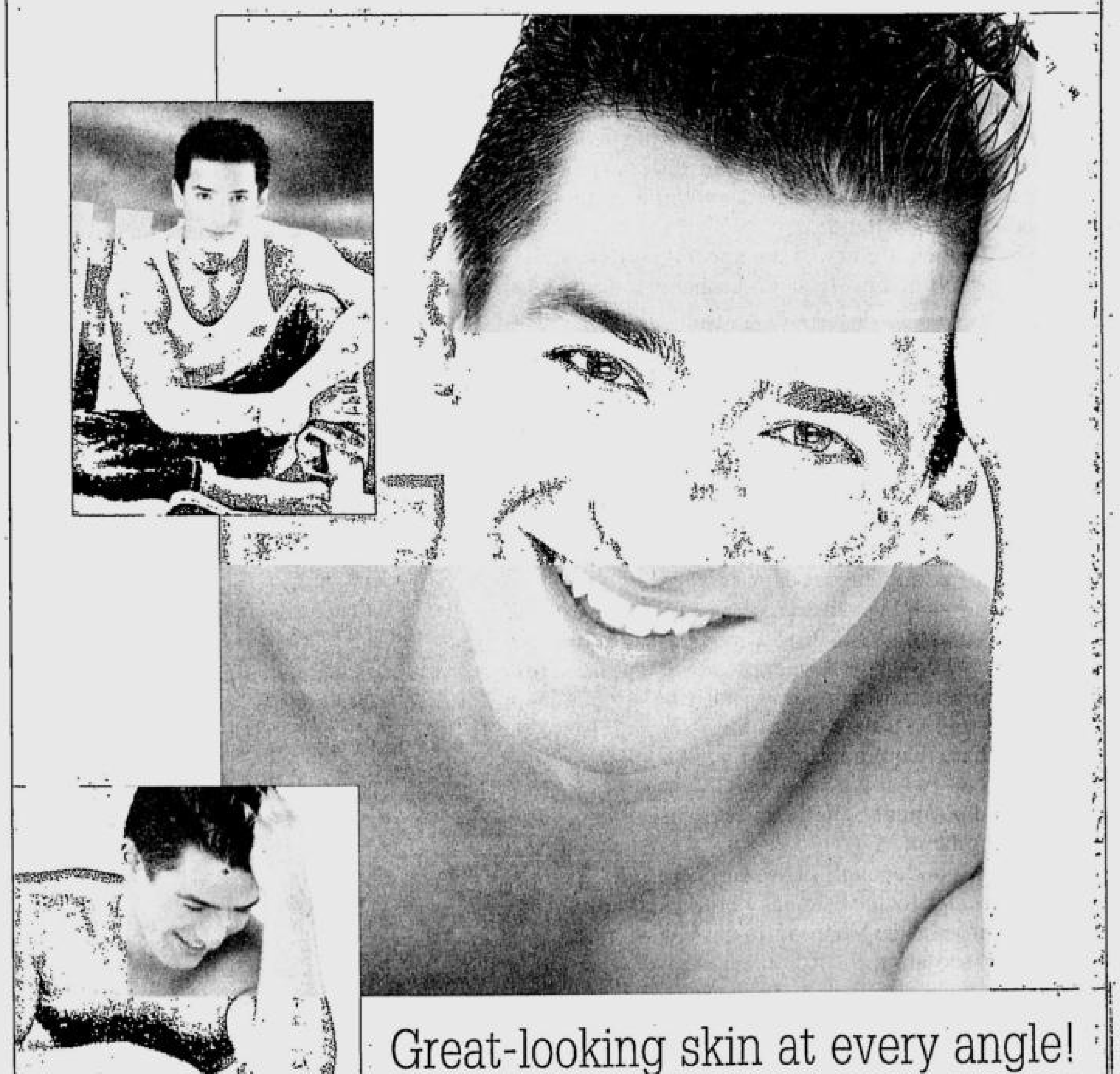
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OPINION

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Vol. 17 No. 33
ISSN 0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at **Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines** • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-48, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13, Fax: 528-02-34.

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Privileged detainees

EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING his deportation from Malaysia, the Moro National Liberation Front leader, Nur Misuari, was promptly hied off for detention at the Philippine National Police camp in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where he now occupies the cell vacated by former President Joseph Estrada and his son, Jinggoy.

The reason for Misuari's detention at the PNP camp is that it can ensure security measures while he stands trial on charges of rebellion. The cell was specially built to provide amenities for the deposed president not normally extended to ordinary detainees, but the Estradas were transferred to the VIP room of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center for medical attention. Also, detention at the hospital was found convenient for taking the Estradas to the Sandiganbayan to attend the trial. The unstated truth, however, is that the Macapagal administration facilitated the renovation of the hospital's VIP room in response to the complaint by Estrada's followers that he be given more lenient treatment in detention consistent with his status as a former president. The transfer of Estrada to the VMMC was thus a political decision intended to calm disquiet among his followers over what they considered indignities heaped upon him by the new administration.

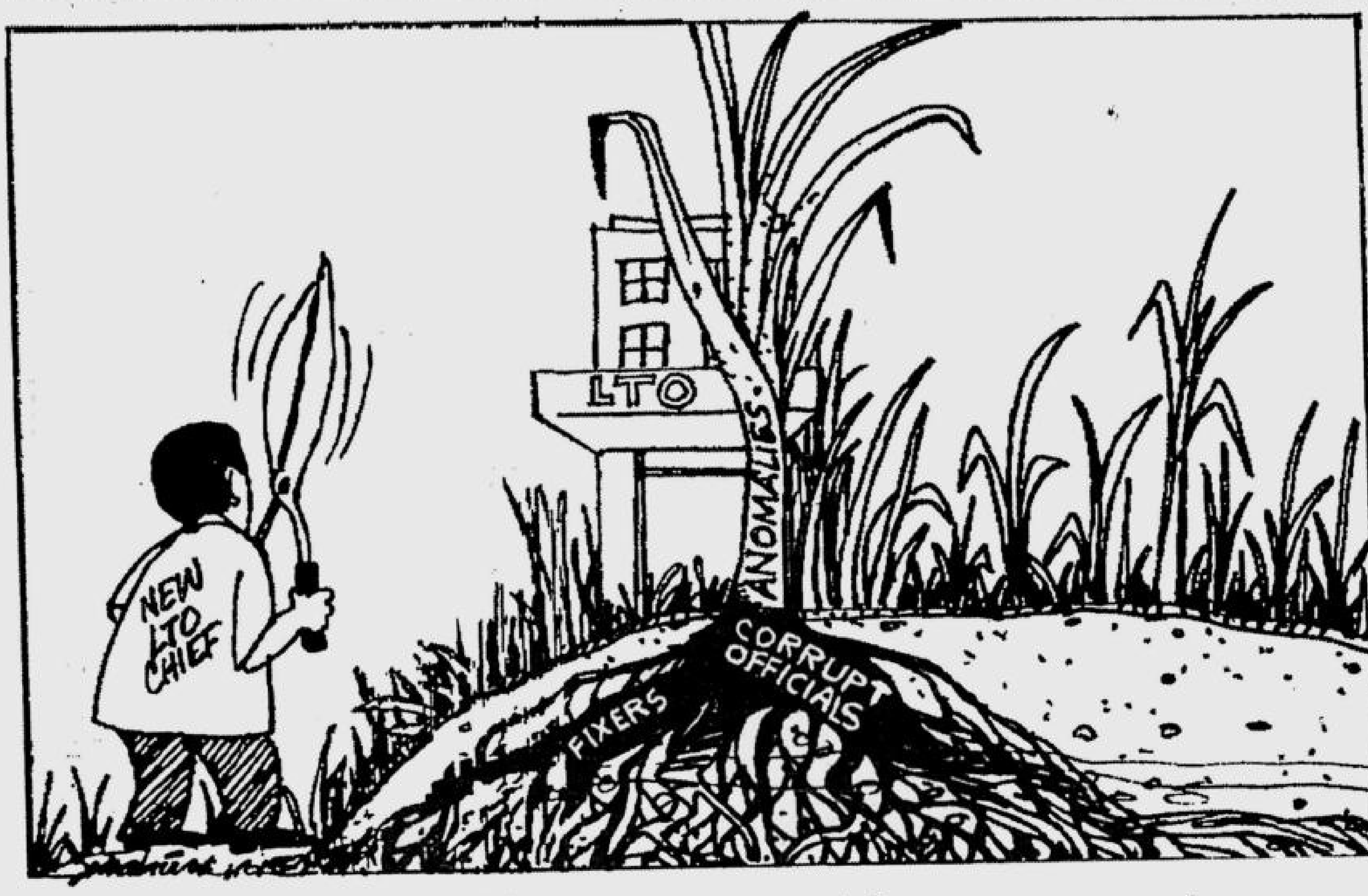
Misuari is a beneficiary of the special cell vacated by Estrada at the PNP camp. Misuari is probably a more healthy man than Estrada, and he has availed himself of the not-so-spartan amenities of the PNP cell, including visits from friends and relatives and the services of a cook who specializes in "halal" (religiously acceptable) food. Again for reasons of security, the justice department has sought permission to hold Misuari's trial, not in his home grounds in Jolo, but in a court near the detention center to prevent disturbance from his followers.

But Misuari may not enjoy the monopoly of the VIP cell at the PNP camp for long. Justice department prosecutors have asked the Sandiganbayan to order the return of the Estradas to the camp from the VMMC following a Supreme Court decision turning down the former president's petition to be granted house arrest. Misuari may share the same cell with the Estradas unless a new cell is built separately for the former. It is hard to imagine how Misuari and the Estradas could co-habit—what with their different tastes in food, religious and political beliefs, and the different types of friends visiting them.

What may be good enough for Misuari at the PNP camp may not be good enough for the Estradas who, during the holidays, held lavish parties at the VIP room of the VMMC that did not show they had serious medical problems requiring a lengthier stay in the hospital.

We are sure that, if the Estradas returned to the camp, the authorities will find a way to separate them. What is more important to point out, however, is that the Estradas and Misuari have been extended privileges in detention not enjoyed by ordinary detainees, and their status as former political leaders has something to do with this. Their enjoyment of privileges is justified by security reasons—meaning that, in the name of security, they cannot be mingled with ordinary detainees. They are political persons, with still considerable political following, and by implication, the government is handling them with velvet groves, lest it might fuel the resentment of their constituencies.

The double standards applied by the government in the treatment of detainees reflect the privileged status of the political class even in the penal system. To serve the ends of security, the government has unwittingly opened the way to expanding detention facilities for VIPs who have gotten into trouble with the law. This is a dilemma for the administration which has sacrificed notions of equality before the law in the effort to buy political stability.



Adopt a dog and be at peace with your conscience

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ONE of the nicest and original gifts I received last Christmas was a donation made in my name to the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) by the gift-giver. PAWS sent me a very nice card informing me of the donation.

PAWS deserves all the help it can get. It is the only group I know that is truly working for the welfare of animals. The old Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is next to useless.

One of its activities is to take care of unwanted, abandoned, neglected strays and animals subjected to cruelties.

You'll be surprised but there are many irresponsible pet owners, even in supposedly upscale villages. These owners allow their dogs to wander in the streets where they pose a menace to pedestrians and overturn garbage receptacles and scatter the trash. Not only that, they run the risk of being run over by vehicles, contracting rabies and other diseases from other dogs, stolen by dognappers and the village drunks, and be wounded and injured in fights with other dogs. If their owners truly love them, they would keep their dogs safely inside their yards, but they don't. They let the dogs out the whole night, most likely so they'll poop outside to save them the chore of sweeping their droppings. Most dogs are kept to guard against burglars, but how can your dogs warn you when they're out somewhere chasing a bitch in heat or rooting through the garbage of your neighbors?

Local government units and barangay officials who are mandated by law to round up stray animals and fine their owners are not doing their jobs. Homeowners associations try to remind their members to keep their dogs in their yards but the appeals usually fall on deaf ears.

Some local government units like Marikina (but not Quezon City or other Metro Manila cities and municipalities) do round up stray dogs. The problem is what to do with them once they're caught and the owners refuse to retrieve them and pay the fine. Some cities gas them to death en masse like what Adolf Hitler did to the Jews during World War II. Others sell or give them to the neighborhood drunks for *pulutan*. Many unfortunate dogs are illegally transported in cages and crates to Baguio where they are slaughtered and eaten as a delicacy. Man's best friend but owned by irresponsible humans face a bleak future.

But here comes PAWS to the rescue. PAWS takes the unwanted pets (not only dogs but also cats and other animals) from the city pound, takes care of them, gives them a physical examination and all the necessary vaccinations and then offers them for adoption to responsible humans. But first, it wants to make sure that the prospective foster owner has the right temperament to take care of a dog and won't just turn it into *azucena*.

PAWS will have seven dogs from the Marikina City pound up for adoption this Saturday, Jan. 12, at its Animal Rehabilitation Center in Loyola Heights (behind Ateneo), Quezon City; right after the Katipunan-Aurora flyover (going to Marikina), make a U-turn to the small side.

These dogs have already been selected from the rest as those in good health and with good potential to be family dogs. By the time they are turned over to their new owners, they will have been neutered or spayed and given vaccinations. Not only that, PAWS representatives will visit your home from time to time to help solve any problems and give you tips on how to take care of them.

If you are interested, ask for an application form by e-mail at paws_hq@compass.com.ph or via telefax at 724-1986. Then go to the PARC shelter at Loyola Heights from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday for interviews and to meet your prospective pets. Confirm the approximate time you would be dropping by PARC by e-mail or by texting 0917-8315970. The dogs cannot be brought home on the same day. Instead, they will be given vaccinations, neutered/spayed and delivered to their new home or picked up by their new guardians (depending on the arrangement) the following week.

Take one of these unfortunate dogs into your home if you think you're suited for it. If they're not adopted, they would be put down—but they have done nothing wrong except fall into the hands of irresponsible owners. We have to help PAWS get them new homes because its shelter and resources are not infinite.

Adopting full-grown dogs, by the way, is better than adopting puppies. You don't know how puppies will grow up and look like as adults. Many cute puppies turn out to be ugly and difficult to handle as adults. With adult dogs, however, you already see how they look like and know their temperament. Adopting unwanted adult dogs is very rewarding emotionally.

Our family has six dogs, all but one of which were adopted as adults from owners who did not want them. The latest is an *askal (asong kalye)* which was abandoned in front of our house by the maids of its former owner (he is the type of irresponsible owner who has no business having dogs). It is a thin, sickly looking black-and-white pooch, as ugly as an *askal* can be. The maids said their employer told them to throw it away because it has *galis* (scabies). Why didn't he take it to the veterinarian instead of abandoning it in the street? Anyway, it was only a slight case of mange and a trip to the veterinarian quickly cured it.

Now the dog is healthy and happy. Its fur has a shiny sheen, no trace of the mange. It has become a very affectionate dog, leaping in happiness, curling around our legs and licking our hands in happiness when we arrive home. If its former owner can only see it now. And the veterinarian charged us only P500.

Time is ticking

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago is back, and she has a fearless forecast. It's Erap versus Gloria in 2004.

She said that last weekend. Shortly after saying as well that no way Fidel Ramos may run in the next elections because the Constitution forbade it. She forgot that in this country, there is no law that will not bend to a determined will. Which she should know because she was the one who interpreted an international agreement to mean a treaty during the Visiting Forces Agreement debate. The Constitution clearly says also this country may approve a treaty only when the other party holds it to be so. The VFA never went through the US Senate for ratification, it is just an agreement on their part. Santiago said it was the same thing.

But never mind that, she may have a point about an Erap-Gloria showdown a couple of years from now. Erap at least has every legal ground to run again. He never completed his term, serving an even shorter time than his successor, who is determined to have a second crack at the bat. He was never found guilty in the impeachment trial, the trial having ended abruptly by an act of people power. There is no legal barrier to his running again—short of being convicted and jailed for plunder.

And maybe not even then, to go by the case of Romeo Jalosjos. Curiously, the law in this country says a man may not be presumed to be guilty with finality until the Supreme Court rules against him. I did hear a few months ago from some friends that the strategy of Erap's camp is to put all sorts of legal obstacles to his prosecution in hopes of delaying a trial. Or at least in hopes of delaying his case reaching the Supreme Court. That way he can run again in 2004. If he wins, it will shove the case beyond the pale of law into the realm of politics. Where the stakes are higher and the rules are different.

A weird scenario doubtless, but this country's middle name is weird. Certainly, weirder things have happened. Can anything be weirder than a convicted rapist winning a congressional election?

But can Erap still win if he gets to run again? I got asked that recently in a couple of interviews, and I said that, completely unfortunately, I had very little doubt he would.

At the very least that is so because President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's own popularity, as shown by her winning the vice-presidential elections by a mile, does not owe to IQ, it owes to show biz. It owes to her transformation through a PR binge from staid economist to waif-like Nora Aunor of Philippine politics. Her reminders to the world of Sharon Cuneta's birthday in the thick of discussions about policy must show the tack she means to pursue in trying to win over Erap's legions to her side. That will not be so easy with Erap there. Show biz is Erap's franchise. You cannot win a fight in your opponent's turf. In an electoral fight between Ms Macapagal and Erap, I have no doubt Erap would win hands down.

At the very most, that is so because Erap continues to remain popular notwithstanding the impeachment trial. "Edsa III," however you interpret it, would have shown how little Erap's crookedness bothers the poor of Metro Manila, who are probably representative of this country's poor generally. Either they do not believe it, or they figure everybody else is a crook anyway, Erap is at least **their** crook. With Erap having turned again into the underdog, an image he is milking for all it is worth, with his complaints about not being allowed to go home for Christmas—he does have the instinct to know what tugs at the Filipino's heart—his possibilities are endless.

In any case, there's not much to see in reality to counter the myth. Things have not changed for the poor to drive home the point that the change was for the better. Things in fact have gotten worse for them. The SWS survey merely confirms what most everyone has known all along, that the economic indicators notwithstanding, most everyone feels poorer this year than last. Which is not entirely subjective: wages have not risen, factories have closed and prices are skyrocketing (as you must know from your *sari-sari* stores). That must ravage the poor more than anybody else.

It's a frightening thought, the prospect of Erap coming back to haunt. Which must drive home one very basic point. That is not just the need to prosecute the plunder case against him with a terrible sense of urgency—something that can never happen with Aniano Desierto there, he is the weakest link—though that is a burning need enough in itself. It should be carried out with frenetic energy even as we speak and not at the 11th hour when it would look like harassment and openly invite another "Edsa III."

The real point it drives home is the need to take the poor very, very seriously. Or the need to have a terrible sense of urgency about uplifting their plight. We keep the poor desperate and they will act desperately. We keep the poor ignorant and they will act irrationally—or at least from our own perspective of what is rational, they themselves think they are being perfectly rational when they believe in people like Erap. We keep the poor wretched, or make them even more wretched, and they will act wretchedly, or even more wretchedly. I do not know in any case who is being more ignorant or irrational or wretched, the poor who follow the logic of their situation, or we who expect—even demand—that people who live that way act rationally. As Ms Macapagal is bound to find out, you humor the poor by visiting Payatas, by promising the moon to three token kids, by flashing smiles and waving hands at them, and they will humor you into believing they are with you. Till crunch time comes.

Time is ticking, for all of us. Things that tick have been known to blow up.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Like closing barn door after horses have fled

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SPIRITING Nur Misuari out of Malaysia and depositing him in his cell at Fort Sto. Domingo in Laguna was so top secret that even new ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin didn't know about it. Keeping Misuari's repatriation completely under wraps and getting on with it was one of the best things the Macapagal administration did in recent months. For had the actual operation been discussed in the open it would never have taken off in this country where everything, including coup d'états by the military and in the Senate is, to paraphrase Senate President Frank Drilon, discussed and debated *ad infinitum*—mere grist for the rumor mills. Misuari's flight was well executed, but the administration's problem now is to ensure that he won't be sprung out of his detention cell by his followers—for indeed they could be nearer than anyone thinks. And yes, his trial should be in Laguna, as the Department of Justice wants.

* * *

The order of the Monetary Board, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policymaking body, to the Unitrust Development Bank (UDB) to stop doing business after its examiners confirmed that the bank had been incurring continuous enormous losses and granting huge loans with unacceptable collaterals was like closing the barn door after the horses had fled. The UDB declared a bank holiday on Jan. 4 after depositors began withdrawing big amounts that couldn't be supported by the bank's liquid assets of only nearly P64 million, against which it had incurred a liability of nearly P200 million. The Bangko Sentral and the Securities and Exchange Commission, however, appear to have been quite remiss in monitoring many things, and should explain this dereliction of duty to the authorities. *Kawawa ang mga maliliit na* investors.

* * *

One question that ought to be answered by the Bangko Sentral and SEC was why the UDB's owner, Genta Ogami, whose handsome giant photos smiled genially on millions of Filipinos along various highways, gypping them of hard-earned life savings in a pyramid-type scam, was allowed to operate for so long despite a prior conviction for fraud in 1999. For months rumors floated about a multibillion scam in the making, but nothing was done about it. Then too, apparently Ogami's bank had loaned far more than its collateral and misused deposits belonging to small Filipino depositors. Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.'s committee on banks should conduct a full-dress investigation of this scam so that something similar could be avoided in the future. Above all, some people ought to be prosecuted.

* * *

Some media appear bent on making a big thing out of a supposed "rift" between President Macapagal and former President Ramos, despite numerous denials by the two leaders to the contrary. To borrow a phrase from former Sen. Jovito Salonga, "*mukhang talagang pinagsasabong sila.*" The *sabong* story probably sells newspapers, but I find it a sheer waste of precious front-page space, for a number of reasons.

For one thing, nothing could be more remote than linking Ramos to the Philippine Consultative Assembly. I sat in on one or two of the meetings of motley personages that included Salvador Enriquez in the last months of Erap's regime, and I know for a fact that FVR had nothing to do with them (I dropped out after I realized that Enriquez's group was more interested in setting up a junta than following the constitutional succession; I felt that the latter option would discourage military adventurers from taking things into their hands). At some point Enriquez anointed himself chair of Montayre's group in order to have a forum of sorts.

Then too, by 2004 FVR will be 75; to be sure he's a strong 73, but he knows that the Filipino voters consider anyone above 60 as "old." Moreover, at the rate GMA is going, one can't dispute Lakas Secretary General Heherson Alvarez's assertion that the party's fielding GMA in 2004 is a "foregone conclusion." Lakas would be crazy to junk a sitting president, unless she commits something politically suicidal that will cause her party to desert her en masse.

* * *

As for the question of whether GMA is politicking too early by barnstorming around the country, it depends on who's looking at it. The opposition can see that she's eroding their ranks by so doing, and they're crying foul and accusing her of politicking. But her people like to regard those trips as opportunities to assess the situation in the countryside, and consolidate support for her administration. They argue that considering that she came into the presidency with so little support, it's best that she sews it up, adding that a president with little support becomes easy target for hungry wolves dressed in military/police uniforms. GMA is correct when she asserted to the media that whether she goes around the country or stays in Malacañang, she'll be criticized. The best thing for her is to do what she thinks she ought to, and stop being too sensitive to her critics.

* * *

In the dzRH Sunday 9:15 p.m. radio program I co-host with Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, we featured Prof. Romulo Neri, finance professor at the Asian Institute of Management and director general of the House planning and budget office, to do an economic overview of the past year and what lies ahead. Neri points out that while our 3 percent growth rate last year was far better than that of some of our neighbors who are suffering from recessions, there's a lot to be done to move the economy. The problem with our economy, he stressed, is that it has remained relatively undeveloped so that even in times that are good for our neighbors, ours doesn't move as fast as theirs.

* * *

Among the sectors that Neri feels ought to be moved are the port operations and transportation, notably shipping and the railway. Neri opines that there is a conflict of interest situation in the set-up whereby the Philippine Ports Authority is both a regulatory body, a port owner and operator. He maintains that the PPA ought to stay as a regulatory body, but should privatize the port operations to make them more efficient, and sell the land it holds, in order to generate much-needed funds. He also lauded recent congressional moves to modernize the shipping industry to make it world-class, stressing that making it more efficient would reduce the tremendous transportation costs of shipping goods around these islands, especially food produce.

Neri also encouraged the administration's plans to revive the railway system in Luzon and to create a new railway system in Mindanao. I agree wholeheartedly with his observation that reviving the commuter train system to and from Central and Southern Luzon to Metro Manila would be the answer to the overcongestion and traffic problems in the metropolis. Truly, if we could clean up those commuter trains, minimize breakdowns and get them to depart and arrive on time, this would encourage more people to move away from Metro Manila and toward those areas. Commuter trains function very well in other cities abroad.

Happiness is power

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, I received a letter from Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas on a column defending her on, among other things, her statement to the media in Hong Kong that if Filipina domestics were unhappy about their wages, they should and would find work elsewhere or choose to go home.

For this Sto. Tomas was blasted by a migrant workers' organization who said her remarks were "irresponsible" because Filipina domestics in Hong Kong really had no choice but to stay, since there were no jobs waiting for them in the Philippines.

It was my opinion that the labor secretary's statement was meant to strengthen the Philippine government's bargaining position regarding the plan of the Hong Kong government to lower the minimum wage for domestics. But in her letter, Sto. Tomas said it wasn't only a bargaining position but a "personal conviction I have held for many years."

Sto. Tomas was actually the first head of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration under then Labor Secretary Blas Ople. Beginning as a "stop-gap" measure to ease unemployment pressure in the early '80s, the export of labor evolved into a policy and is now the lynchpin of the economy. Indeed, it's only the billions in dollar remittances from abroad that is keeping our economy afloat, and barely above water at that.

But it had been her position from the start, said Sto. Tomas, that Filipino migrant workers are an asset to the economies and societies of the countries they work in, and that their work, however menial, must be accorded proper value, recognition and protection.

* * *

AND this, she said, is what she expressed to Hong Kong authorities. If Filipino domestic workers find themselves unhappy with their working conditions and wages, they could find better-paying jobs under more comfortable conditions in other countries, especially in Europe.

But for this to be a reality, Filipino workers themselves must view their work as respectable and valuable in a market economy. They must think of their skills as marketable commodities for which future employers must be willing to pay competitive prices.

Sto. Tomas said that Filipinas are considered the "top-of-the-line" among the pool of domestic workers in Hong Kong. Why is this so? I think that it's not only their facility with English, but also their willingness to work long hours, their flexibility and the cheerfulness with which they approach not just work but life itself. Don't dismiss this last as a Pollyanna attribute. I think it's what keeps the women (and men) sane amid the loneliness and alienation of migrant life.

"The Probe Team's" telecast last Tuesday focused on Filipina "DH's" and the controversy stirred by the government's and the employers' association's moves. Visiting a mailing center to which Filipinas flock on weekends to send packages to their families, the reporter found a young boy in his "*yaya's*" company. "He's so attached to me," the Filipina domestic said, "that he can't go to sleep unless I'm beside him." Indeed, as the reporter reflected, "the next governor of Hong Kong could very well have been raised by a loving Filipina DH."

And if I were a Hong Kong employer, I would much rather have a contented, cheerful and loyal domestic looking after my children and my home rather than one chafing under a meager salary and wanting nothing more than the chance to escape or find another job. That's why in Manila, the minimum pay for domestics obeys market forces rather than government rules, to the domestics' advantage. That's how it should be in Hong Kong, too.

* * *

SPEAKING of Pinay cheerfulness, an article that appeared last month in The Economist attempts to probe what exactly it is that makes Filipinas such a resilient workforce and a vibrant community amid the economic gloom enveloping much of Asia, including Hong Kong and the Philippines.

In the article "An anthropology of happiness," the writer notes that "Once a week, on Sundays, Hong Kong becomes a different city. Thousands of Filipina women throng into the central business district, around Statue Square, to picnic, dance, sing, gossip and laugh. They snuggle in the shade under the HSBC building, a Hong Kong landmark, and spill out into the parks and streets. They hug. They chatter. They smile. Humanity could stage no greater display of happiness."

What a contrast, the writer says, with the ambience in the area the rest of the week. "Then it is the Chinese, famously cranky and often rude, and expatriate businessmen, permanently stressed, who control the city centre. On these days, the Filipinas are mostly holed up in the 154,000 households across the territory where they work as 'domestic helpers,' or *amahs* in Cantonese. There they suffer not only the loneliness of separation from their own families, but often virtual slavery under their Chinese or expatriate masters. Hence a mystery: those who should be Hong Kong's most miserable are, by all appearances, its happiest. How?"

* * *

THE LOT of the typical Filipina domestic is difficult and physically demanding and fraught with loneliness and a terrible homesickness. Many are mothers who have left their husbands and children back home, only to care for the children of others, pouring their affection and concern on these foreign children. Others are the main source of support for their families, sending siblings and even nieces and nephews to school.

"Under such circumstances, the obstinate cheerfulness of the Filipinas can be baffling," says the writer. "But does it equate to 'happiness,' as most people would understand it? 'That's not a mistake. They really are,' argues Felipe de Leon, a professor at Manila's University of the Philippines. In every survey ever conducted, whether the comparison is with western or other Asian cultures, Filipinos consider themselves by far the happiest. In Asia, they are usually followed by their Malay cousins in Malaysia, while the Japanese and Hong Kong Chinese are the most miserable. Anecdotal evidence confirms these findings."

(More tomorrow)

POs & NGOs on SMC, UCPB, ECJ & GMA

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THERE's been a flurry of statements and mixed messages from different sectors—the government, business, people's organizations and non-government organizations—on the $540-million Kirin Brewery buy-in into San Miguel Corp.

It was announced a few days ago that SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. (ECJ) has agreed that government nominees will now sit in all "crucial" committees of SMC, the first time ever they would be allowed. A news report said that ECJ was supposed to have agreed to this arrangement after the government dropped its opposition to ECJ's voting share agreement with Kirin as part of a deal in which the Japanese brewery will buy 15 percent of the food and beverage giant for $540 million. In this set-up Kirin will vote its shares with ECJ for the next five years.

There had been doubts and concerns that Kirin's buy-in, supposedly a welcome investment, might dilute the government's 27 percent share in SMC which it is holding in trust for millions of coconut farmers from whom a coconut levy has been exacted during the reign of the dictator Marcos and put in the hands of ECJ as "administrator."

But what do non-government organizations allied with farmers' interests and farmers groups themselves have to say about this? Will this new set-up assuage their fears? Had their voices been considered?

The Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) was alarmed that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was so interested in seeing the SMC-Kirin deal consummated despite opposition from farmers' groups, the Philippine Commission on Good Government and the Office of the Solicitor General.

The PPI thinks the deal should not push through. The first important reason is that there is no transparency in this deal because no one knows exactly the terms in this buy-in and because ECJ has kept the small coconut farmers in the dark.

Does ECJ have the right to sell those shares? The PPI is asking. Remember, the PPI reminds, that ECJ has only three seats in the board which gives him minority representation and therefore not empowered to decide. The contested shares in SMC, the PPI adds, were part of the sequestered ill-gotten wealth acquired using coco levy funds and therefore ECJ should not even benefit from those shares.

The PPI reminds the President that should the sale push through, the farmers' claim over the 27 percent SMC shares would be diluted while ECJ's claim over the SMC shares would be strengthened. GMA should look after the farmers' interest not ECJ's.

Did GMA consult the small coconut farmers? Has Malacañang shown any proof or given any reason why this deal would be beneficial to the farmers? How could this be beneficial, the PPI argues, when the sale would strengthen ECJ's claim on the share he is currently voting and on his controlling votes because of his voting trust agreement with Kirin? And how could someone with many pending cases involving the levy funds call the shots?

Instead of pursuing the Kirin deal, the PPI suggests that GMA should first work for the full recovery of the levy funds and assets, including the 20 percent contested shares that ECJ now holds. This is the logical move after the Supreme Court declared that the coco levy funds are public, not private funds.

How lucky could ECJ get to get treated this way. As Goyito, the INQUIRER mascot carabao exclaimed the other day, with flared nostrils and all: *"Ang lakas naman niya!"*

NCSCF on UCPB. The National Council of Small Coconut Farmers, a broad alliance of about a dozen or so coconut peasant organizations and reform advocates are strongly opposing the possibility of power sharing of government and farmers with ECJ in the governing board of the United Coconut Planters Bank.

The NCSCF considers as "off-track" the government's move to forge a "win-win" solution regarding representation in the UCPB. With the Supreme Court's ruling on the public nature of the coco levy funds, NCSCF farmers are wondering why ECJ is being allowed substantial representation in the UCPB board. "It is like sharing the loot with the thief!" the NCSCF exclaims. Not my words.

Incidentally two representatives from the ranks of the small farmers have been nominated but seven more are to be appointed. The NCSCF is demanding that the appointments be from farmers' groups or at least be mutually acceptable to the farmers and government. Says the NCSCF: "If Cojuangco people prevail in the UCPB, a bank established from the blood, sweat and tears of the small coconut farmers, the Supreme Court declaration would not make any sense at all."

From the Kilos Saka, this question: "If the funds that bought UCPB have been declared public, then why should President Arroyo bend over backwards to satisfy Mr. Cojuangco and still give him representation in UCPB by appointing Mr. Efren Villaseñor as one of the board members? Remember that Mr. Villaseñor ceased to be a representative of the small coconut farmers when he decided to forge a compromise agreement with Cojuangco last year."

Kilos Saka argues that with the Supreme Court decision declaring the coco levy funds as public, the logical next move of the government should have been to ease out Cojuangco from coco levy-funded companies and to fully reclaim the fund and its assets. The only person pleased with the "win-win solution" Kilos Saka adds, is Cojuangco.

Mis-credit. When I watch a movie I always want to read the credits that come at the end. I want to know the how, where, when and who of the making of the movie.

I sat it out till the end of "Bagong Buwan" the much-praised film festival entry directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya. Well, the INQUIRER editor in chief Leticia J. Magsanoc was credited as the editor in chief of the racy tabloid People's Journal. Same fate for Inquirer Libre's Abel Ulanday. Hollered Letty: "No, thank you!"

The Muslims must be pleased that so much care was done to get Islam right. Doctrinaire Catholics should not complain that the "Angelus" as recited in the movie completely changed a tenet of their faith. After all, the bishops endorsed the movie.

Going home

YOUNGBLOOD

Raymund Jose G. Quilop

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ONCE again, the two-and-a-half-day conference has come to an end. After interacting with various academics and so-called analysts, it was time to pack my bags and go back to the Philippines. Once more, I had to check-in at the airport, waste several hours waiting for my flight, especially if I am taking the country's flag carrier.

And that afternoon, I hurried to the airport arriving earlier than the usual two hours required by airliners for their passengers to be in, as I was expecting heightened security checks as a result of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. After roaming around a little bit, I proceeded to the boarding gate just in time for the previously scheduled boarding time. But alas, just as I was settling down on my seat to wait for the boarding announcement, I heard the public address system announce that the boarding gate was changed. Worse, it was on the other side of the airport. But worst, the departure time had been reset to an hour later.

Taking my bag, I walked to the other side of the airport feeling a bit bad as I was on that side a few minutes ago loitering around in the various shops there. Finally, I reached the designated boarding gate.

As I settled down on my seat once again to wait for my flight, I suddenly realized that I was in the company of Filipinos who were also going back to the Philippines for various reasons. Some were going back after touring and shopping in Hong Kong for several days. Some were looking forward to a month's vacation in the Philippines after working in Hong Kong for several months or years. Others who similarly worked there were going home permanently.

Listening to the stories they voluntarily shared with whoever was seated beside them, whether a long-time friend or just a new acquaintance at the airport, gave me an idea as to what they did in Hong Kong. While the tourists recalled the sights they saw and bragged about the items they bought, the others talked about their bosses, how these bosses tried to put one over them but how they also put one over their bosses. Some, apparently those who have been in Hong Kong for quite some time, shared how excited they were to finally see their families again.

While some foreigners may never understand why Filipinos are like this, complaining that the atmosphere suddenly becomes noisy with Filipinos around, it is this characteristic of Filipinos that continues to keep our spirits high, in spite of the challenges we face in life, the difficulty of living in the Philippines for the tourists and the hardships of life for the returning Filipinos who worked abroad.

Back at home, we Filipinos may not really feel an affinity with our neighbors, as we never bother to help somebody in our neighborhood or in the streets crying for help. But outside the Philippines, it becomes second nature for us to start a conversation with whomever we think is a Filipino. It gives us a sense of relief to converse with our fellow Filipinos. "The Filipino nation is nothing more than an imagined community," says Anderson, a scholar. This appears more real abroad than in the Philippines.

Meeting fellow Filipinos, especially in airports, never fails to amaze me. For Filipinos are interesting people, fun to be with although sometimes irritating. I could easily start a conversation with them. And once a conversation gets started, they can easily share their life stories without hesitation and holding nothing back.

Such openness sometimes brings with it an annoying downside, as they can ask me, equally without hesitation, to check-in an extra luggage for them so they don't have to pay the excess baggage fee. Just as irritatingly, they can fill the atmosphere with so much noise with their stories that I cannot concentrate on the paper I am desperately trying to write for another conference. And when the attendant finally announces that it is time to board the aircraft, they all rise from their seats in unison, hurrying and squeezing themselves toward the gate, unmindful of the rule that those with higher seat numbers get to board first.

Some have the penchant of unpacking their luggage at the airport to get rid of the extra pounds of weight they initially put, hoping the airline crew would allow them to sneak in a few extra pounds. This has forced airlines, particularly in Chicago, to designate a special lane for Filipinos, where one is forced to queue if he holds a Philippine passport even if he has only one hand-carried luggage with him.

But of course, the smile that greets me when I accidentally get to stare at them eventually calms me and affirms to me my being Filipino.

Raymund Jose G. Quilop, 27, is an assistant professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . . ?

Polendey killings

CELEDONIA Polendey and her youngest son, Theodore Lindo, were found lifeless in their apartment in Oro Vista Subdivision, Marikina City, in the morning of March 13, 1998. Another son, Alfred Jake, was found with multiple stab wounds in different parts of his body. He was rushed to the St. Vincent's Hospital and survived.

Police recovered from the scene a short bolo, scissors and a kitchen knife. Bloodstains suggested that a furious struggle took place in the kitchen, bedroom and sala. The assailants also took some cash from the drawers before fleeing.

Based on Alfred's description of the suspects, the police invited for questioning Renato Punzalan, a dental technician living a block away from the Polendeys' apartment. They also questioned Alejandro Balba and his brother Bienvenido and Thomas Uson. All of them admitted to being drug users once but they denied having anything to do with the killings.

Alfred pointed to Punzalan as the killer of his mother and brother. He was arrested afterwards and detained at the Marikina City Jail.

Charges of robbery with homicide were filed against Punzalan with the Marikina Regional Trial Court on March 20, 1998. The case was raffled off to the sala of Judge Ruben dela Cruz of Branch 272. During the arraignment on March 31, Punzalan pleaded not guilty.

On Sept. 21, the prosecution moved to amend the information against Punzalan and sought the inclusion of Balba. Dela Cruz issued an order approving the motion.

On Oct. 14, the prosecution filed another motion seeking a clarification on the word "dismissed" in the judge's order. On Nov. 9, the judge explained that the term meant that "the amended information should take the place of, and supplants the original information..." and should not be interpreted to mean the dismissal of the case against the accused.

Punzalan, however, asked the Court of Appeals on Jan. 4, 1999 to set aside Dela Cruz's ruling and that his constitutional right to be informed of the nature and cause of the charges against him had been violated. On July 30, the Court of Appeals' 12th Division dismissed Punzalan's petition for lack of merit. The court said the original information might be amended and noted that the amended information was "virtually the same" as the original. Punzalan filed a motion for reconsideration but it was denied on Jan 25, 2000.

Punzalan filed a petition for review with the Supreme Court on March 1 along with a motion to litigate as a pauper.

Case status: Punzalan is still detained at the Marikina City Jail. Alfred remains paralyzed from the waist down as a result of his injuries. He is set to give his testimony on Jan. 15, 2002. Alejandro Balba and two unidentified suspects remain at large.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

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Doing the 'doable' well

THE WORD "doable" never fails to impress me. Most of my professional life has been around the world of ideas—new marketing strategies, new advertising techniques, new products, new businesses, new political strategies, new promotional slants, latest public relations spins, etc. In my conceptual kind of work, I leave to the operators the hard tasks of production and profit-seeking. They are the real heroes of the game of achievement, the pragmatic doers who are constantly focused on making things happen. I love them all.

Going back to the idea of "doability," I am of the belief that most Filipinos are well meaning. If we can only make ourselves focus more on the "doable," we will experience the effects of self-satisfaction and pride for our motherland in no time.

What then are these "doable" things? Easy. These are the ordinary duties of everyday life. It starts from waking up on the dot every morning without losing a single minute to laziness. We have to learn how to romance the ordinary. In other words, to rediscover the grandeur of the ordinary duties we constantly face in our work-a-day life. To appreciate once again that our ordinary daily tasks are the more important ones, considering that no one but us can do them best. And they are all "doable."

Often, the big problems we carry give us tremendous anxieties, thereby immobilizing us. But these so-called big problems are oftentimes products of our overactive imagination, and at times the results of not having attended to the little duties that popped up earlier.

Daydreaming and desperation are the enemies we must learn to parry off many times during the day. We can only indulge in dreams if we use them to inspire us to plod along with the ordinary things that may bore us from time to time. Despair, as we all know, is the old trick of the devil himself.

This is the call we wish to make starting the year 2002, the specific advocacy all of us most promote: to give back the true value of the ordinary, by doing all of them extraordinarily well. We should appeal to all and sundry: the powerful and the weak, the poor and the rich, the young and the old, the sick and the healthy, the downtrodden and the privileged, the follower and the leader—we will not be awed by social status, we will give great respect to individuality.

If we learn to respect and take good care of the little duties of each moment to a heroic degree, we will be transformed into better persons: a good husband or a good wife, a good son or a good daughter, a good student or a good teacher, a good nun or a good priest, a good businessman or a good politician, and finally a good friend—thereafter our homes and families become more cheerful, our work and play communities ennobled, our acts of governance more pleasant and easy.

Is there a more "doable" way?—**MANOLING DE LEON, 16 Polk St., North Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila**

LETTERS

More LRT, MRT coaches

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez (PDI, 1/7/02) has to establish the connection between reducing Metro Rail Transit overloading and the construction of escalators. Isn't overloading caused by the simple law of supply and demand wherein there are very few coaches and many commuters?

So, dispatching more coaches is the answer, not more escalators. However, there definitely is a need for more escalators to facilitate the ingress and egress of the commuters at the stations, especially the elderly—a person with a weak heart cannot survive the 60-step climb to an MRT station.

Alvarez also has to explain how the extension of the MRT to Monumento to link up with the Light Rail Transit would reduce overloading. With more people using the LRT and MRT, there will certainly be more overloading! We're back to the law of supply and demand: we need more coaches.—**CARMELO S. DOROTHEO, 4548 Clover Rd., Sun Valley Subd., Parañaque City**

Redesign our ₱100 bill

THE PHILIPPINES' P100 bill **must** be changed. We said we are an independent nation for over a hundred years but how come the US national flag is more prominent in the P100 bill than our own? Why should the US flag be there at all? I think it's now time to redesign this P100 bill.

There have been three presidents already since Cory Aquino but no government official has noticed this. Maybe these officials don't care even if our bank notes carry another country's flag. Talk about sovereignty, huh!!!—**NAPOLEON SERRANO, npserrano@hotmail.com**

Tolerance is the key

AFTER THE SEPT. 11 terrorist attacks and with the ongoing conflict in Mindanao, a lot of articles and opinions have been written about the need for peace and how we are supposed to achieve it. The problem, however, is the word "peace" is subjective. We all want peace, but we define it under our own terms.

A lot of people say we should achieve it as "Christ" preached it, etc. But, if we noticed, other camps would also say that we should work for it based on their respective religions or political agenda. If we call for peace under the restrictions of religion or political bias, what we are declaring actually is not peace but war because people who are different from us would contradict and resist our notion.

We try to force-feed our "peace" down other people's throats. The key therefore in conflict management is tolerance. The acceptance of differences, be it cultural, sexual preference, etc., goes a long way in maintaining equilibrium. However, tolerance entails education. Education shatters the confines of prejudice and gives us insight into culture and arts. The more backward and less educated the people, the more they are influenced by fundamentalism and secularism.

Tolerance requires us to shed the shackles of religious and political institutions. Let us free our minds and peace shall follow. To paraphrase the words of a victim of violence, let us imagine there's no heaven or hell below us, above us only sky, imagine there are no countries, nothing to greed or borders to fight for. Then we shall see ourselves not as Americans, Chinese or Arabs, etc. or Christians, Muslims, Hindus, etc. but only as fellow human beings, co-existing in this one and only planet, Mother Earth. And the world can be truly as one.—**GIL VALDEZ, tay2kseth @yahoo.com**

Chinoys worried about criminal Chinese nationals

FOR THE LAST decade, whenever we come across reports about big drug syndicates or big drug busts, almost always Chinese nationals are involved. In fact, the police tell us that more than 90 percent of drug cases involving foreigners are those of Chinese nationals.

We are local Chinoys who are Filipinos first and foremost. But since there is Chinese blood flowing in our veins, we feel ashamed, embarrassed and extremely bothered whenever we hear about Chinese nationals arrested for drug trafficking.

We follow with interest and elation news about China's phenomenal growth the past decade. That's why we are puzzled as to why Chinese nationals still opt to come to our impoverished country, the Philippines. There is nothing here for them and that is what drives them to illegal activities, if that was not their purpose for coming here in the first place.

The recent news about the seizure of 500 kg of shabu, followed by another 300 kg, all from Chinese nationals, is bad enough. The kidnapping of Jacky Rowena Tiu by Chinese nationals is even worse. And the Chinese Embassy has added grave insult to the injury done us by interceding on behalf of two of these kidnappers. Doesn't the embassy realize how the evil kidnapping menace has shattered our lives?

These Chinese nationals have disgraced the Chinese race. Although they make up a tiny portion of the population, the fact that Chinese names appear daily in our papers bring shame and unpleasantness to the entire Chinoy community.

We have enough problems coping with our daily lives, living as we do with fears of getting kidnapped and our children being victims of prohibited drugs. We do not need additional threats coming from Chinese nationals who think of our country as a haven for criminal syndicates. We cannot tolerate these people, and we beg of local Chinese authorities to find means to send them back to China.

Our parents and grandparents came here barefoot and empty-handed. It is the Philippines' warm hospitable people who treated our ancestors as their compatriots and gave them all the opportunity to succeed. Our generation has tried its best to repay the debt of gratitude our ancestors owe our country. We believe we are succeeding, by being good educators, social workers, NGO volunteers, journalists, engineers and other professionals who serve our nation and our Filipino people wholeheartedly.

The last thing we need are newcomers from China who destroy what we have built and striven for so long. Again, we beseech Chinese authorities to act, and act now, before these criminal elements wreck completely the centuries-old good relations between us Filipinos and the Chinese people.—**AL CAI DY, Ilaya Street, Binondo, Manila**

True need for guns

IN CONRADO de Quiros' column titled "Reason," (PDI, 1/1/02) all his assumptions are true except that he failed to mention that in the past the Philippines has never allowed its citizens to be armed legally. The concept that guns corrupt applies only in that only the rich and powerful could own them, ergo, they think they are above the rest of us. Some societies have a high gun ownership yet their only problem seems to be that the owners tend to use them in suicide.

Where does De Quiros live? Right in suburbia where the cops are 30 minutes away and because he is a journalist with "press courtesy" stamped on his forehead, he fails to recognize that for some of us, there is a true need for guns.—**NATHANIEL GALAPON, zmtazz @aol.com,**

Will SSS benefits be increased retroactively?

RECENTLY, a Manila daily (not the INQUIRER) reported that the Social Security System increased the salary credit ceiling of employees earning at least P12,250 a month, allowing members in the high-income bracket to contribute more. This is according to Miguel Roca, SSS officer in charge.

Roca further said that the ceiling is important because "it is the basis for computing benefits, such as maternity, disability and retirement, salary loans and other loan facilities." The hike in contribution "would effectively increase the amount of loans and benefits."

It may be asked: "Is the increase in benefits retroactive? To be specific, an SSS member who retired more than five years ago with a monthly salary of P13,000 upon retirement, is he entitled to an adjustment of his pension?

I believe many SSS retirees will highly appreciate it if it will be explained that the adjustment in benefits generated by the increased salary credit is operative either retroactively or only prospectively. Will Roca or Joel Palacios, assistant vice president for the media affairs department of the SSS, be kind enough to explain this to the SSS retirees?

If the increase applies retroactively, that will mean adjustment of pensions of qualified current SSS pensioners. Consequently, the hike will answer in part the long-time clamor for increased SSS pensions to provide the retirees with a nearly comfortable retirement in the remaining days of their lives.—**FACUNDO S. TALLO, 182 North 1st St., Angela Village, Talon, Las Piñas City**

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Three queens

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I MUST have received at least five copies of this Three Kings Day text message and because I found it so amusing, I forwarded it to several people, something which I don't usually do. I also read the message to two of my classes and when several of my students asked for copies, I was convinced I should do an entire column about this rather unique greeting. Here it is in its original text-ese English:

"If it had bn d 3 Wise Women, dey wud hav asked 4 directions, arrivd on tym, helpd delivr d baby, cleand d stable, made dinr & brought practical gifts. . .BUT MEN?"

As text messages go, we'll never know who started this one going—it may even have been in a book, or on the Internet. But the way it's been circulating suggests the message struck a familiar chord for many people, mainly mothers, wives, sisters and girlfriends of, well, men who reminded them of the Bible's three not too wise men.

Let me say now I'm doing all this tongue-in-cheek. In my classes, I shared the text message as a way to get discussions going on the debate between "essentialists" and "social constructivists."

In the area of sexuality and gender research, "essentialists" are those who say there's something "essentially" male and "essentially" female. In Tagalog, it would be expressed as "*ganyan talaga ang lalake*" or "*babae kasi,*" almost insinuating that the behavior is innate to a particular sex. In contrast, a social constructivist would say that our gender traits and behavior are shaped by culture and history—what is "typically male" behavior today, in the Philippines, may have been a female "trait" a generation ago, or may still be a female "trait" in another society.

The Three Wise Women text message isn't really essentialist or social constructivist. It presents some stereotypes about gender, and comes close to suggesting they're inborn. But are they, really?

Let's tackle the Three Wise Men wandering around on camels, hopelessly lost like some 21st century male on a freeway. Yet research actually suggests that it's females who may have greater difficulties with spatial thinking—entrust them with maps and they'll get all confused.

Now, such research has actually been contested, especially when media reports reinterpret the findings as "Most women can't read maps." We have to understand that research conclusions are usually based on differences between populations. For example, a study might find that in a group of females, about 30 percent had difficulties reading maps while in a group of males, 25 percent had similar difficulties. A statistician would therefore conclude that "significantly more women than men have difficulties reading maps." By the time the media pick this up, the percentages disappear and you start imagining "most women" not being able to read maps, forgetting that in the study, 75 percent of the females handled the maps well.

Other non-researchers may end up thinking "all men are good with maps," which isn't true either because there will be about 25 percent who are hopeless with maps, including me—I have difficulties even opening one of those made-in-hell accordion roadmaps, especially if they've been handled earlier by another male who couldn't fold them back properly.

I fervently believe there are gender differences in behavior and skills, but I'd suggest, as a social constructivist, that these differences can be explained mainly by social and cultural influences. If the Three Wise Men didn't ask for instructions—a notorious male stereotype—we'd explain it as a consequence of stubborn male pride, which many societies uphold as a desirable trait. Like the three kings, men are supposed to be wise they'll never admit they're lost.

Let's get to that part of the text message about the Three Wise Women arriving on time. That passage makes me suspect the message originated in a western country—we know in our society, what's more typical are all these female wannabe Imelda Marcoses who believe that arriving on time is déclassé. The higher your status, the later you arrive. (Thankfully, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is said to hate being late, so she might just change this social norm.)

What about the sloppy male who doesn't know how to help? One of my best friends tells me her husband is the ultimate slob and so are his two children (actually her children too, but when she describes them as slobs, they're HIS children). She agonizes: "His mother is obsessively neat but he didn't inherit that." Ah, I tell her, but that is so typical. In many societies, including our own, mothers are compulsively orderly and go on to teach their daughters to be just as obsessed. Daughters only, and not the sons, precisely because everyone believes men are, by nature, slobs and you can't do anything about it. So the daughters learn to clean up after their brothers who grow up to become the next generation of male slobs. It's cultural, not innate.

Practical gifts? Yeah, really, what were the Three Wise Men thinking, bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh to a carpenter's son? Do a quick mental inventory now of the gifts you got over the holidays. I just did and yes, to some extent, men give the craziest, most useless gifts, but I also got quite a few bloopers from women (and can't say which ones because the gift-givers might be reading my column today). Generally though, if men give "impractical" gifts it's again because in societies like our own, they're the ones who shop. The rare occasions they do, like when they fall madly in love with someone, they're totally stumped, not knowing what to get and often relying on the recommendations of sales clerks.

I could go on and go but I just noticed what a mess my desk is, a bit, I guess, like the stables. Stereotypes are fun, but make sure you question them as well. Here's another text message, this one I am sure made in the Philippines, to get you going: "If it had bn d 3 Wise Gays, dy wud hv found da way, arivd n grnd styl, helpd dlivr d bb, redecorate d stabl, made dinr & brot bongga gifts. BUT MEN? Hapi 3 Queens!"

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Do we really fool God?

THE THEME of the Seventh National Convention of the Parish Renewal Experience (PREX) that was held in Baguio City last Jan. 4-6, 2002 has great relevance and pertinence in addressing the current miseries of our country. I was fortunate to attend this convention along with around 4,000 delegates from all over the country and tackle its theme: "A Call to Morality."

Our country's biggest problem is not really about too much politics, widespread corruption, greed for power and money, nor apathy. It is all rooted deeply in the "epidemic of immorality" that is predominant especially among those in government who are supposed to lead us onward. It is sickening to hear about accusations of blatant corruption, trumpeting of accomplishments to perpetrate themselves in power while a lot of people wallow in poverty and hardships.

If only more of those in government service would practice true "servant leadership" that Jesus Christ has shown us, many of our country's problems will surely disappear. Although not all, many of those in the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of our government seem to have forgotten what it means to be in public service. Many would pretend that they are there to serve, but they use their power and position to enrich themselves, and use their riches to remain in power, justifying this as necessary to "serve" the people.

But let us not judge these people for what we perceive them to be, but just remind them that they may be able to fool and manipulate the people, but they cannot hide their real motives and ambitions from the eyes of the Almighty Father. They just have to look around; our country has experienced many tumultuous and equalizing events. Sins of the past always come out to haunt us, and only those who are pure in heart, thoughts and deeds can escape the wrath of God eventually. Do these immoral "servant"-leaders really think they can fool God?

Repentance and change as a response for this call to morality would uplift us from the quagmire of problems that beset our country today. Let us all be a part of this call because each of us can be equally guilty as well for our sins of omission, apathy and indifference. Let us also pray for the people deeply trapped in this epidemic of immorality, not just those in government service but in all the other sectors of our society, that they may see the light.—**MICHAEL M. YU, Nativity of Our Lady Parish, Industrial Valley, Marikina City**

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

4 Israel soldiers die in Palestinian assault

JERUSALEM—Two Palestinians armed with grenades and assault rifles stormed an Israeli Army post near the Gaza Strip early Wednesday, killing four soldiers before being shot dead in a gun battle, the Israeli military said.

It was the first deadly attack on Israelis in nearly a month and dealt a severe blow to US truce efforts. Earlier this week, a US mediator had left the region on a hopeful note, saying both sides were working toward a truce.

The Islamic militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for the assault on the outpost. Last month, Hamas had announced it was halting attacks in Israel, in compliance with demands by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

There was no immediate Palestinian Authority comment.

Israel's security Cabinet met for three hours Wednesday morning—a regularly scheduled meeting—and Israel TV quoted Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as telling the ministers that Israel would stick to the principle of retaliating for every attack.

The Israeli military said both assailants wore Palestinian police uniforms.

Before dawn Wednesday, the attackers cut through the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip, and then stormed a nearby Army outpost, throwing grenades and firing assault rifles. After the initial attack, an Army patrol rushed to the scene to help the soldiers under fire. An Israeli officer and three soldiers were killed in the attack—all members of the Army's Bedouin tracking unit, the Army said.

Two soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously.

The two assailants were killed. The first was killed on the spot, and the second was shot dead after a chase, according to Israeli radio reports.

The post guarded the small Israeli farming village of Kerem Shalom.

In a phone call to the Qatar-based TV satellite station Al Jazeera, a caller said the attack was carried out by Izzedine al Qassam, the military wing of Hamas. The caller identified the assailants as Mohammed Abu Jamous and Emad Rizzek, residents of the Rafah refugee camp, Al Jazeera said. Relatives of Abu Jamous said he was a member of the Palestinian naval police, and had left his home Tuesday night.

Both men were well-known Hamas supporters, camp residents said.

Israeli foreign ministry official Arye Mekel said Wednesday's attack was proof that the Palestinian Authority "has done nothing, or very little, to fight terrorism."

Since Arafat's Dec. 16 order to halt all attacks on Israelis, Palestinian security forces have been rounding up a number of suspected militants, including members of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad group. However, Israel has said the Palestinians have not targeted the masterminds of terror attacks.

Sharon has said Arafat has not abandoned violence, and that the lull was temporary to allow the Palestinians to regroup.

The Israeli allegations were fueled by Israel's interception last week of a weapons shipment allegedly intended for the Palestinian Authority.

Israel has sent intelligence officials to the United States and Europe to press its claim that the Palestinian Authority was responsible for the ship carrying 50 tons of weapons, including rockets that could have threatened Israeli cities.

On Wednesday, Israel demanded that the Palestinian Authority arrest Fuad Shobaki, head of the finance department in the Palestinian security services, for allegedly funding the arms purchases, Israeli officials said. Israel has said four crew members, including the captain, were members of the Palestiniannaval police.

The Palestinian Authority has denied it was behind the smuggling attempt and has promised to investigate whether any of its officials were involved in it. *AP*

Arafat slams arms smuggle raps as 'lies'

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Wednesday denied Israeli charges that his administration was linked to a shipload of weapons seized by Israel last week, calling the allegations "lies."

"Israel is coming out with inventions every day, sometimes they are talking about a ship, other times they have other inventions, as if we were the occupiers," he told reporters in Ramallah, where he has been confined by Israel for more than a month.

"All they are saying about the ship is lies, lies, lies, lies," said the veteran leader.

He was speaking as an Israeli military delegation prepared to head for Washington with what Israel says is incontestable evidence linking close associates of Arafat to the Karine A, a ship seized by Israeli commandos on the Red Sea on Jan. 3 with 50 tons of contraband arms on board.

A senior Israeli military official said Tuesday it was impossible Arafat was not in on the deal to smuggle weapons allegedly shipped from Iran, which has long accused him of treachery for having made peace with Israel.

"This operation was conducted by very high-level Palestinian officials, close friends who were under the direct control of Arafat," said the official, who asked not to be named.

"It doesn't make sense that Arafat didn't know about this strategic operation and that amount of money and such a unique move with Iran," he said, estimating the Palestinians' outlay in the purchase at $10 million.

The official said that 1.5 tons of explosives seized in the haul were destined to have been shared with Islamic groups backed by Iran and used in suicide bombings.

But Arafat said: "If we wanted to have weapons we could get them from Israel, it's easier and cheaper."

He said Israel was "looking for excuses to continue their military escalation plans" against the Palestinian territories.

"It is regrettable that this Israeli leadership does not want peace, they are running away from making peace" he said. *AFP*

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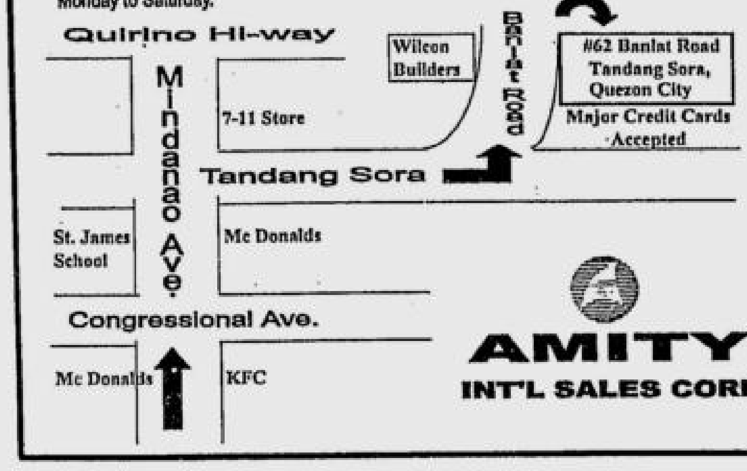

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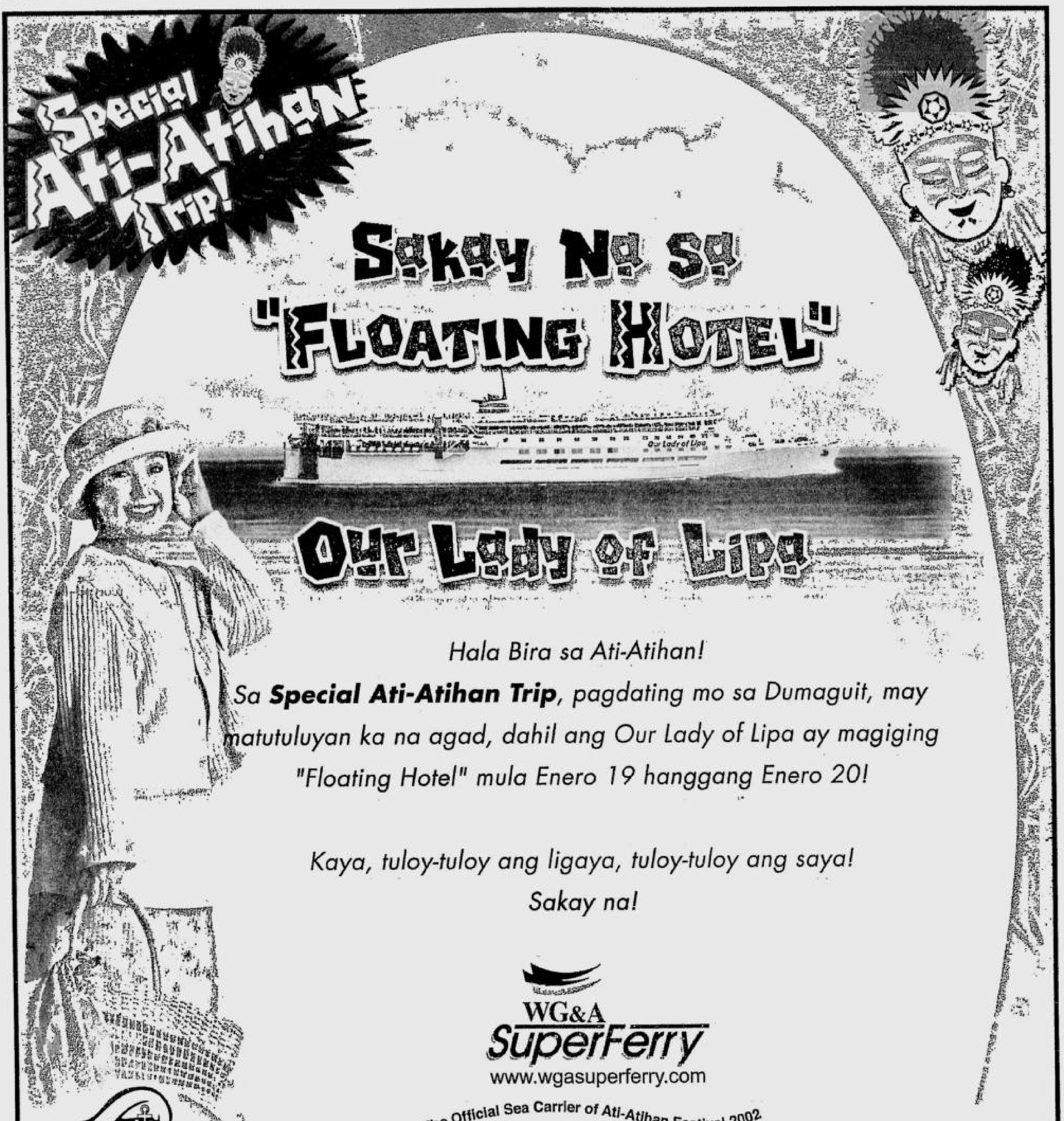

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DUMAGUIT	JAN. 19	SAT	8:30 am	JAN. 20	SUN	2:00 pm
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AN AFGHAN Northern Alliance soldier reads the Koran next to an anti-aircraft heavy machine gun on the road linking the international airport Bagram and the capital Kabul Jan. 9. New Afghan interim leader Hamid Karzai said on Tuesday he might ask the international community to provide more foreign forces to patrol cities beyond Kabul.

REUTERS

Top Taliban officials surrender but freed after recognizing gov't

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—The Taliban defense and justice ministers and several other high-ranking leaders of the ousted ruling militia have surrendered to officials of the new Afghan government and been allowed to go free, a Kandahar commander said Wednesday.

Jalal Khan, a close associate of Kandahar Gov. Gul Agha, said they had met officials in the Kandahar government and received general amnesty after recognizing the new interim administration in Kabul, the capital, headed by Prime Minister Hamid Karzai.

They have been allowed to go back to their homes and live with their families, Khan said.

"Those men who have surrendered are our brothers and we have allowed them to live in a peaceful manner," Khan said. "However, they will not participate in politics."

They include Mullah Ubaidullah, the defense minister, and Nooruddin Turabi—the one-eyed, one-legged justice minister who imposed some of the Taliban's harshest edicts.

Others are Abdul Haq, former security chief of Herat province, an ancient cultural crossroads where the Taliban's crude, extreme Islamic rule was never well-accepted, the minister of mines, Mullah Saadudin, and senior officials Raees Abdul Wahid, Abdul Salam Rakti, and Mohammad Sadiq.

Intelligence ministry officials in Kabul would not comment Wednesday on the reported surrender and amnesties. In Kandahar, Khan said that they were in line with general policy granting amnesty to Taliban who recognize Karzai's government.

Negotiations on the surrender of ex-Taliban figures have recently frustrated the US-led coalition, especially the apparent escape last week of the leader Mullah Mohammed Omar while he had reportedly been surrounded in the mountainous Baghran district by anti-Taliban fighters.

Marine Lt. James Jarvis, in a daily briefing to reporters at the Kandahar airport, where more than 300 al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners are being detained, voiced no objection the release of the former Taliban officials.

"We're not in the business of determining who should and should not be in custody right now," Jarvis said.

In Washington, America's top general, Joint Chiefs Chair Gen. Richard Myers, said Tuesday that US troops wrapping up operations at the bombed-out Tora Bora complex near the border with Pakistan had seized two senior al-Qaida members, their computers and cell phones.

Besides the computers and phones, "some small arms and training documents were also found," Myers said. "We're exploiting those as we speak." The Americans are looking for clues to future al-Qaida operations and organizational details.

The two men, found Monday in a group of 14 suspected members of al-Qaida, were deemed sufficiently important to be removed immediately to the detention center in Kandahar.

American operations have shifted from Tora Bora to the Zawar Kili area around Khost in Paktia province, site of a former al-Qaida training camp and an assembly area for possible bids by vanquished fighters to flee into Pakistan. US special forces teams are on the ground in that area, where a US Green Beret soldier was killed in an ambush Friday. *AP*

Post-Taliban Afghanistan wades into something unexpected–tourism

KABUL—He suggests the breathtaking eastern mountains near Tora Bora. Or perhaps a hike to admire the plant life. Villages on the western plains are nice, too—brimming with cultures and handicrafts for a memorable vacation experience.

Abdul Rahman, a new member of an infant government, oversees the Ministry of Civil Aviation. But a more apt title might be Minister of Wishful Thinking. For this man, a doctor by training, is also responsible for accomplishing the unimaginable: bringing Afghanistan's tourism industry back to life.

"I am an optimist," Rehman acknowledged Tuesday. And then: "What are you interested in? You tell me, and we have it,"

While launching a tourism industry for a country that the Western world views as the font of 21st-century peril may seem an absurd notion, Afghans are full of reasons why it makes good sense.

Some say it's an expression of hope after five years of insularity encouraged by the now-deposed Taliban—a belief that a fresh government and a new era might bring a bit of modern society back to their long-neglected land.

The presence of foreigners who aren't invading also offers a dual opportunity—an injection of good economic karma, always tourism's chief perk, and a chance to show a largely oblivious world the destruction wrought since the Soviets invaded in 1979.

"Afghanistan was a very hot tourism spot. It was famous. Now it's famous all over again," says Shah Mohammed, a book dealer at Kabul's Inter-continental Hotel, smiling wryly.

He still sells a 1977 tourism booklet packed with maps, ads (a "Turkman yurt hotel" in Mazar-e-Sharif) and colorful photos of mosques, mountains and an orderly Kabul that belongs only to yesterday.

"Afghanistan is a new travel destination," it enthuses. It also depicts Buddha statues, many of which were destroyed by the Taliban, who believed the figures insulted Islam.

Today, beyond safety, the question is where tourists might go—and how.

Even if air service to Afghanistan is restored, many Western travelers accustomed to package tours in air-conditioned comfort would blanch at the destruction and deterioration evident in even Kabul's best neighborhoods.

Pothole-rutted roads wreak havoc on the tailbone, and an entire swath of western Kabul is a moonscape of bombed-out buildings, legacies of the factional fighting that tore Afghanistan asunder in 1992-96.

Amid this devastation is a onetime prime attraction—the Kabul Museum, which could have been the cornerstone of a cultural tourism push.

Today, emptied of objects, it sits in the sun, its windows long gone and roof damaged by rocket fire years ago. Tacked near the entrance is a poster identifying different varieties of land mines that passersby should avoid.

Foreign visitors are welcome. Doors open each morning at 8.

"They could see the destruction, and maybe they could help. That would be a good use of tourism," said Jauma Khan, one of two guards patrolling the museum Tuesday afternoon.

Not far away, at the ramshackle Kabul Zoo, Marjan the one-eyed lion held court over a menagerie of 20 animal breeds. This, too, could be an attraction again—with a cash infusion of, say, $2 million. Still, zookeeper Sheragha Omar, another optimist, says foreigners should return. *AP*

Archbishop of Canterbury retires at 66

LONDON—The archbishop of Canterbury on Tuesday announced his retirement as spiritual leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans, prompting press speculation about a successor and a flood of praise for his work steering the Church of England through a decade of upheaval.

The Most Rev. George Carey, 66, will retire Oct. 31 after a decade bedeviled by controversy over women priests, gay clergy and the church's mounting financial problems.

As the long, slow process of choosing a successor began, the Right Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali, 52, a Pakistan-born bishop who won praise for his insights into Islam after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, was seen as a strong contender for the post. *AP*

US judge hears arguments on televising terrorism trial

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia—Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person charged in the Sept. 11 attacks, wants live television of the trial that may show how Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida organization planned acts of terror.

Prosecutors, worried that al-Qaida members would be among the viewers, are opposing the idea.

US District Judge Leonie Brinkema must decide whether to allow a televised trial despite a federal rule that bans cameras in US courtrooms. At least some courts in every state allow televised state and local trials.

"Seldom has there been a criminal trial for which televised coverage could be more clearly warranted," Court TV said in asking that cameras be allowed.

Brinkema was hearing oral arguments on the question Wednesday.

Others supporting a trial broadcast are the C-Span cable networks, the Radio-Television News Directors Association, CNN, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, NBC, CBS and ABC.

While the position of the news organizations was hardly a surprise, the issue took on a higher profile when Moussaoui's lawyers filed a motion in support of the live broadcast, contending it would help guarantee a fair trial.

Federal prosecutors countered that everyone involved would be endangered by live television: witnesses, jurors, even marshals guarding the courtroom. Al-Qaida members, they said, almost certainly would be tuned in.

"The government has uncovered evidence that high-level members of the organization were kept informed of developments in US criminal trials involving al-Qaida members," the prosecution said.

Among trials of people alleged to have al-Qaida links was last year's convictions in New York of four men in the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa.

Moussaoui faces indictments on six counts, charging him with conspiring with al-Qaida members and the Sept. 11 hijackers to kill and maim thousands of people. Facing a possible death penalty if convicted, he has entered no plea. Brinkema lodged an innocent plea for him *AP*

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China slave trade growing

DALUO, China—Henei was 17 years old when a stranger offered her and a cousin work at a restaurant that he said was in this tourist town on China's border with Burma.

Poor and uneducated, she jumped at the chance to leave her mountain village about four hours drive away. Days later, after forced marches through jungles and long van rides under the watch of armed guards, they arrived at a hotel in Malaysia, where they were sold to local pimps.

"They inspected us like clothes at the marketplace. They asked us questions like how old we were, were we virgins," Henei said, wiping away tears of rage that still well up six years later.

Henei, who like other members of her Akha tribe uses only one name, managed to escape. But thousands of other women and girls in China's poor south are falling victim to a growing slave trade with the more prosperous economies of Southeast Asia.

Some are sold to clothing factories or as farm laborers. But many are forced to provide sex in bars and brothels.

Human Rights in China, a New York-based rights monitor, says as many as 10,000 Chinese women may be trafficked into Southeast Asia every year.

Throughout the region, some 300,000 women and children are trapped in "slavery-like" conditions, according to the International Organization for Migration, an intergovernmental aid group based in Geneva.

Most come from poor Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia and Burma. But experts say Thailand's $20 billion-a-year sex industry is increasingly looking to China for cheap labor.

In Thailand, a growing number of Chinese women fall into the hands of crime syndicates like Chinese triads and Japan's yakuza. They are sent to brothels in Malaysia, Japan and even the United States.

Most of the Chinese women come from Yunnan and Guangxi, two of the poorest regions in the country's southwest. And most are members of ethnic minorities whose physical appearance and languages are similar to those of Southeast Asia.

Some are kidnapped outright. But most women leave poor villages by choice, drawn by the modern consumer lifestyle portrayed in Thai television and radio broadcasts that reach southern China.

Far from home, often without passports or cash, they are easy targets for gangs along the route to Thailand. They can be bought and sold several times as they move south.

"Most women are trying to better their lives, looking for the bright lights and big city. They don't start out being trafficked, but they end up being trafficked," said David Feingold, an anthropologist who has researched the trade in women for the United Nations.

Despite Henei's bitter experience, she said 50 of the 200 women in her village in the southwestern province of Yunnan have since left for Thailand.

Some return with enough money to build modern concrete homes with indoor toilets.

Others don't come home.

Henei said she would never forget the moment she realized she'd been tricked. The man had said the restaurant was on the Chinese side of the border. But when she looked out the van window, street signs were all written in Burmese.

"It was the most painful memory in my life. Then we had to get out and walk day and night in grass as tall as a person. We waded through rivers or crawled across bamboo bridges for fear of being seen by Burmese guerillas," she said. *AP*

Loggers destroy 2/3 of Indon nat'l park

JAKARTA—Illegal loggers have destroyed two-thirds of an Indonesian national park over the past decade, a report said Wednesday.

Surveys by Harvard University's Laboratory of Tropical Forest Ecology found that more than 61,000 hectares of the 90,000-hectare Gunung Palung National Park on Borneo island had been destroyed, the Jakarta Post reported.

Eko Darmawan, the leader of the survey team, was quoted by the Post as saying that illegal logging and other kinds of destruction had inflicted total losses of $345 million, or more than three trillion rupiah, at Gunung Palung, in the Ketapang district of West Kalimantan.

More than six million cubic meters of logs had been stolen from the park, Darmawan was quoted as saying.

"The team members went along 13 rivers and found 252 sites where illegally obtained logs were stacked before being transported out of the park," he added.

Redo, one of the surveyors, said the financial backers known as "cukong" were the most important element in the illegal trade.

"What is very interesting is the fact that the loggers always end up indebted to the "cukong." Thus they can do nothing but cut the trees so as to get the money to repay their debts," Redo said.

The "cukong" include businessmen living outside Ketapang, and Ketapang administration officials, he said.

The logging had caused many species of flora and fauna to disappear. "It's hard to find an orangutan in the park now," Redo said.

Indonesia, home to some 10 percent of the world's remaining tropical forest cover, saw years of "rapacious deforestation" under former dictator Suharto, according to a report last year by the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency.

The World Bank has said Indonesian forests were reduced by an annual average of some 1.5 million hectares between 1985 and 1997. By December 1999, Indonesia had only some 20 million hectares of forests left.

The merger of the watchdog group Bapedal with the ministry was announced in a decree issued by President Megawati Sukarnoputri on Monday. *AFP*

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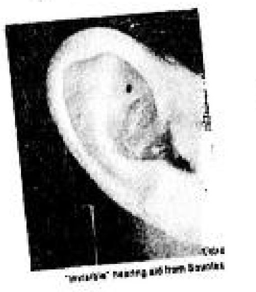

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Russian winter kills 300

MOSCOW—The death toll this season from the cold winter in Moscow has reached 300, a health official said Wednesday.

The number of deaths from exposure in the capital just halfway through winter has already far exceeded the toll from last winter, when 205 people had died from the cold by the end of March.

Three people died from exposure over the past day, said Igor Elkis, chief doctor for the Moscow ambulance service. Twenty-nine more were hospitalized for hypothermia.

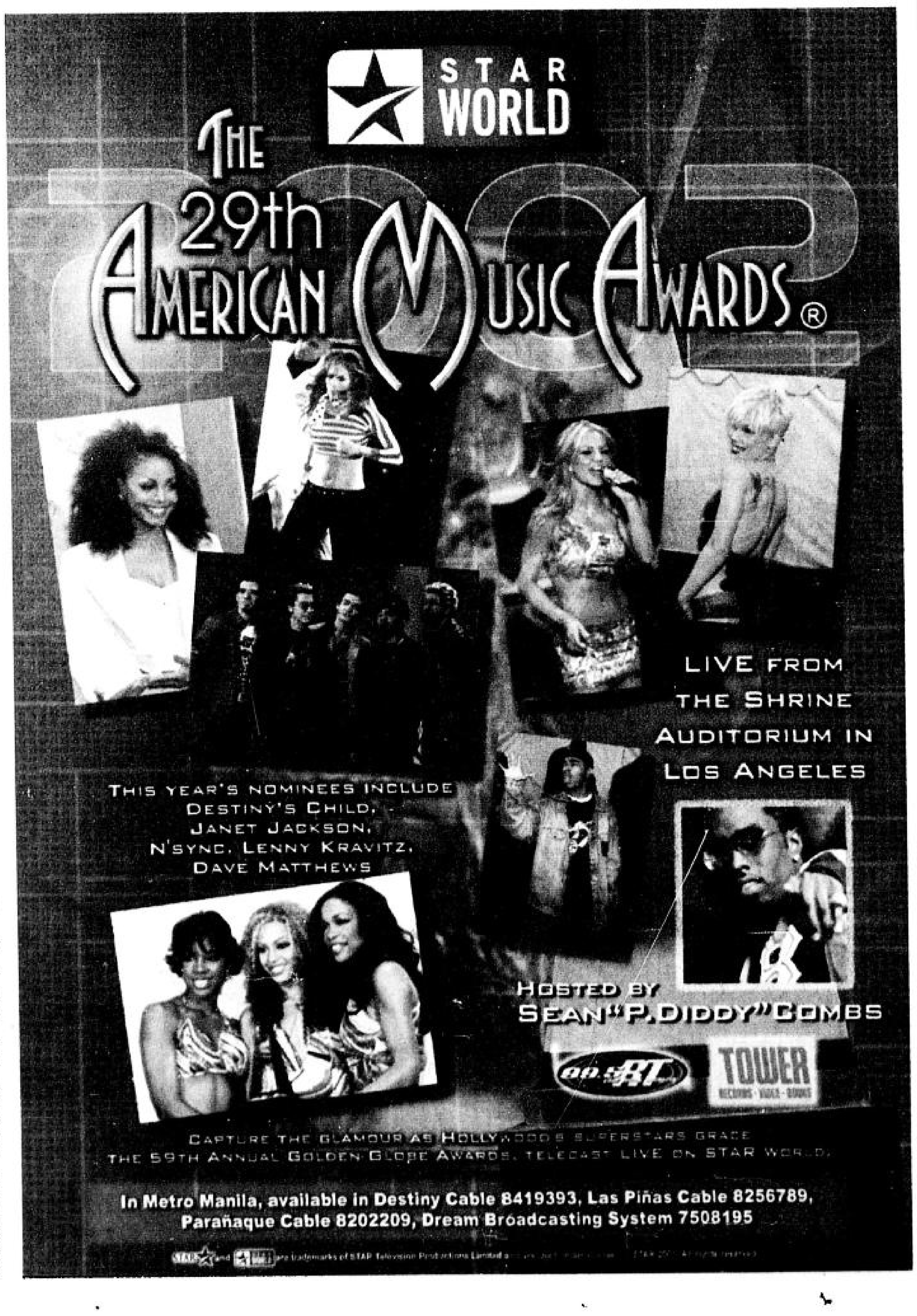
The larger number of deaths this winter is due in part to the cold dropping to lower than usual in Moscow—where temperatures did not rise above freezing for all of December. Earlier this week, temperatures dipped to nearly -30 degrees Celsius.

Many of those who die are drunk people who fail to find proper shelter and doze off in the open.

Especially rough winter weather has gripped many Russian regions over the past few days. A cyclone in Russia's Far East has led to snowstorms causing transportation snarls and power cuts.

The threat of avalanches along military highways through the northern Caucasus mountains has also kept roads there closed, the Interfax-Military News Agency reported Wednesday, citing border guards.

Near-record cold around the southern city of Rostov-on-Don has also frozen up straits in the Sea of Azov, the Itar-Tass news agency reported. The bear in the Rostov zoo has also gone into hibernation for the first time as temperatures have dipped as low as -25 degrees Celsius. *AP*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Categories & Nominees

FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST- Philippines
(Keyword: MUSICARTIST)
A - Freestyle
B - Gary Valenciano
C - Lea Salonga
D - Martin Nievera
E - Regine Velasquez

FAVORITE MALE ARTIST
(Keyword:MALEARTIST)
A - Eminem
B - Ricky Martin
C - Robbie Willams
D - Ronan Keating
E - Shaggy

FAVORITE FEMALE ARTIST
(Keyword: FEMALEARTIST)
A - Britney Spears
B - Christina Aguilera
C - Jennifer Lopez
D - Madonna
E - Mariah Carey

FAVORITE POP ACT
(Keyword: POPACT)
A - Backstreet Boys
B - Destiny's Child
C - M2M
D - N'Sync
E - Westlife

FAVORITE ROCK ACT
(Keyword: ROCKACT)
A - Bon Jovi
B - Coldplay
C - Limp Bizkit
D - Linkin Park
E - U2

FAVORITE VIDEO
(Keyword: VIDEO)
A - The Call (Backstreet Boys)
B - Weapon of Choice (Fatboy Slim)
C - 19-2000 (Gorillaz)
D - POP (N'Sync)
E - Lady Marmalade (Pink, Christina Aguilera, Mya, Lil' Kim)

FAVORITE BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST (Keyword: BREAKTHROUGH)
A - Coldplay
B - Gorillaz
C - Nelly Furtado
D - Alicia Keys
E - Linkin Park

FAVORITE FILM
(Keyword: FILM)
A - Charlie's Angels
B - Crouching Tiger,Hidden Dragon
C - Rush Hour 2
D - Pearl Harbor
E - Shrek
F - The Mummy Returns

FAVORITE FASHION DESIGNER
(Keyword: FASHION)
A - Donatella Versace (Versace)
B - John Galliano (Christian Dior)
C - Marc Jacobs (Louis Vuitton/ Marc Jacobs)
D - Miuccia Prada (Prada/Miu Miu)
E - Stella McCartney
F - Tom Ford (Gucci/ YSL)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 20°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 21° Lo 09°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 27° Lo 16°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 26° Lo 18°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 17°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 25° Lo 17°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 26° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 28° Lo 19°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 22°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/01/10/02

Dumaguete port project faces tougher times

BY ALEX V. PAL
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has imposed stricter requirements for the granting of an environmental clearance to a boat terminal that the Philippine Ports Authority is building in this city.

The project proponents were earlier required to just submit an Initial Environment Examination (IEE) certificate.

But now, Bienvenido Lipayon, Environment Management Bureau regional director, is ordering the PPA to submit an Environmental Impact Study (EIS), which takes longer to prepare and is considered more thorough.

All that the project proponents have to submit for the IEE are plans, clearances, certificates, maps and other documents.

But the EIS requires that they conduct scientific studies on the project's effects on the environment. The studies usually take four months to complete.

Lipayon said they upgraded the requirement of securing an IEE to an EIS because of the strong opposition to the project. He also said reclamation work was a sensitive project.

With the upgrading of the project's requirements, the DENR will set up a five-man Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee to determine if the PPA would be granted an ECC.

PPA regional manager Manuel Gorme said they would have to reassess if they will proceed with the project, given the more stringent requirements.

The boat terminal and reclamation projects at the port area are part of the PPA's Port Development Plan for Negros Oriental.

Environmentalist groups strongly opposed the reclamation project, saying it would destroy the city's famous landmark, the 800-meter Rizal Boulevard that faces the sea.

The project would also destroy corals, which support the subsistence of fishermen living on the shores of Dumaguete, the groups said.

On Monday, the DENR held a dialogue, attended by the PPA and its critics, to discuss the reclamation project.

Those who came were representatives from the Silliman University, the urban poor, the academe and the business sectors, and students.

After hearing the questions and criticisms, PPA city manager Teodulo Paderes said it was only in Dumaguete that their projects were facing such strong opposition.

"We believe that what we are doing is right and we are complying with the rules and regulations," he said. "We believe that what we are doing is for the good of Dumaguete and Negros Oriental, but these questions say otherwise," he said.

Silliman President Agustin Pulido said the difficulty of the PPA in implementing its project in Dumaguete could indicate that it was not following proper procedures.

Congress serious on federalism

BY VINCENT CABREZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Congress is serious about a proposed bureaucratic shift to federalism, now being espoused by opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., because of its political impact on Mindanao and Cordillera autonomy.

This was disclosed by Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, a member of the House committee on constitutional amendments, during a press conference on Wednesday.

Domogan said measures were submitted to the Senate and the House of Representatives late last year, although lawmakers supporting federalism want to orchestrate this new bid for constitutional change so as not to affect the 2004 presidential elections.

With renegade Moro leader Nur Misuari under detention, federalism could be the one "solid" solution to enmity in Mindanao and in the Cordillera, Domogan said.

He said the 1987 Constitution tried to address this problem when it declared Muslim Mindanao and Cordillera as special autonomous regions.

Both regions are subjects of peace agreements, whose terms demand special bureaucratic provisions that impose taxes on local government administrations, he said.

Then President Corazon Aquino approved the first plan for an autonomous government in a ceasefire agreement with former rebel priest Conrado Balweg in 1987.

But Malacañang failed to enact a Cordillera autonomous region after it lost the ratification of two organic acts for Cordillera autonomy in plebiscites held in 1991 and 1997.

Instead, the Cordillera was run as a special administrative region.

Misuari was elected governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao after participating in peace negotiations with then President Fidel V. Ramos in 1996, that partially resolved a longstanding Moro secessionist rebellion.

Both peace negotiations demanded from Malacañang the creation of special government agencies that will run the regions independent of a national government agenda.

Domogan, a former Baguio mayor and Cordillera autonomy advocate, said "the beauty of federalism" was that the bureaucracy allowed diverse forms of government to foster under a more central federal government.

He said the US federal system of government allowed a city to function under a parliamentary form of governance—manned by a mayor that is appointed by a committee—to run side-by-side with an adjacent town that fosters a "strong" mayor, or a city controlled by its mayor.

Domogan said other American towns are run by "weak" mayors or government systems, which are administered exclusively by an elected city manager rather than an elected mayor.

In the same token, an exclusive Muslim Mindanao government and a Cordillera government run by tribal elders can operate autonomously under a federal government center in Malacañang, Domogan explained.

He said federalism would remove the limitations inherent in the 1991 Local Government Code, which devolves administrative powers to provinces, towns and cities but the local government units still rely on tax shares collected by the national government.

Pimentel, who also sponsored the local government code, told the INQUIRER last month that his federalism concept would not even contradict the code.

The House committee on constitutional amendments was wary about the public's reaction to Charter changes.The measures now being studied by the committee include a provision creating regional Senate districts, said Domogan.

He acknowledged that the provision alone could be misunderstood once set against the 2004 elections.

ROUNDUP

Priest ordained bishop in rite

DUMAGUETE CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal ordained on Tuesday Rev. Julito Cortes, parish priest of Bacong town, as bishop of the Dumaguete Cathedral. At least 25 bishops and several priests from different parts of the country attended the ceremony. Most Rev. Antonio Franco, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, was also present. On Jan. 17, Cortes will be installed as auxiliary bishop of Cebu. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Dominguez promoted

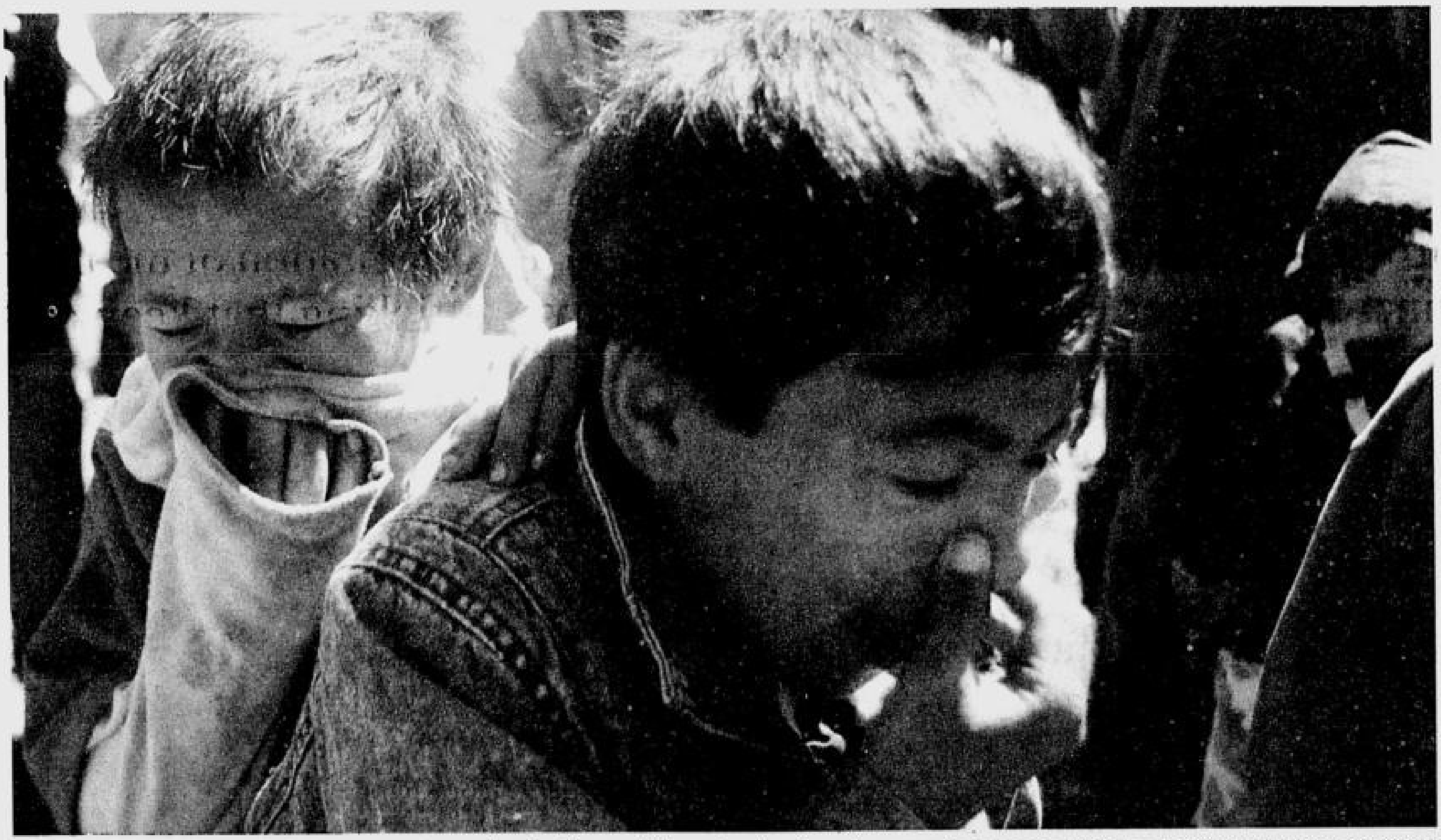
TACLOBAN CITY—Malacañang approved on Saturday the promotion of Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, 8th Infantry Division commanding general, to major general. "I am very happy. I owe this (promotion) to those who still believe in my integrity as a person, (and) as an officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," he said. Dominguez, former commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, became controversial last year when he was accused of allegedly conniving with the Abu Sayyaf during a clash in Lamitan, Basilan, on June 2. Dominguez denied the charges. *Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

No wages

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 5,000 workers, mostly employed as contractual in various construction projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Bicol, failed to get their salaries for December. "We have not been paid by the DPWH for our finished projects," said a contractor, who requested anonymity for fear of being blacklisted by the DPWH. There are 50-60 contractors in the region, each employing an average of 100 workers per project, he said. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Police assailed

MABITAC, Laguna—A human rights group in Southern Tagalog assailed police involvement in the shooting and wounding of a farmer and his daughter in a village here early Monday. A report from Karapatan-Southern Tagalog said Enosencio Pondano, 63, of Barangay Paagahan here and his daughter Andrea, 43, were shot bymembers of the 405th Police Provincial Mobile Group. The police unit reportedly suspected that New People's Army rebels were inside their house. But another report claimed that the police were the ones fired upon by about 10 armed men. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



MARIJUANA on fire emitted too pungent an odor for these children, forcing them to cover their noses during a marijuana-burning ceremony in Buguias, Benguet, attended by President Macapagal.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Wife of ex-mayor found dead inside trash bag

BY JHUNNEX NAPALLACAN
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The wife of a former town mayor in Surigao del Norte was found dead inside a garbage bag that was dumped in a ravine in Barangay Coro, Dalaguete town, 85 kilometers south of here.

The decomposing body of Alona Bacolod Ecleo, 27, was pulled out of a large garbage bag by the Dalaguete police on Tuesday afternoon.

An autopsy report showed that Alona died of strangulation. She also had several contusions in the body.

Senior Insp. Julian Entoma, Dalaguete police chief, said the primary suspect was the victim's husband, Reuben Ecleo Jr., after her relatives claimed that he had a hand in the killing.

The victim's family also asked the police to hasten the investigation.

Reuben, who comes from a political clan in Surigao del Norte, left the couple's residence in Forest Hills Subdivision, Barangay Guadalupe on Tuesday night.

The couple has three children. Alona was a senior medical student at the Southwestern University in Cebu City and was supposed to graduate this year.

Reuben was a former mayor of San Jose town. His mother Glenda is a congresswoman, representing Surigao del Norte's first district. His two brothers also served as mayors in two towns of Dinagat Island.

Reuben is also the president of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association Inc. (PBMA).

Before he left on Tuesday, Reuben gave a note to the housemaid that he was going to Surigao del Norte to find his wife, who had been missing since Sunday.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Reuben in Surigao del Norte but he refused to issue a statement.

Ben Bacolod, Alona's elder brother, said Reuben got mad at her after she insisted that the former mayor be admitted to a drug rehabilitation center.

Josebil Bacolod, the victim's younger brother who lives with his sister in Forest Hills, said he noticed something unusual in the couple's house on Saturday night.

That night, he said he was surprised that all the lights in the house were switched off. He could not also find Juriven Padero, Reuben's bodyguard.

In the morning, Josebil said they could not locate his sister.

But PBMA officials and members yesterday defended their "master," Reuben. They said he was never hooked on any illegal substance.

Arcadio Quia-ot, PBMA member and the couple's neighbor, said Reuben could not have killed Alona because he was with the former mayor from Jan. 5 to 7.

He said he went to Reuben's house on Saturday afternoon and stayed there up to 11 p.m. when he and Reuben decided to visit their chapter in Talisay City.

Before they left, he said Alona had asked permission from Reuben if she could go out with her friends. Reuben allowed her.

Reuben spent the night in Talisay, said Quia-ot. On Sunday, Quia-ot and Reuben visited their other chapter in Lapulapu City, where they also spent the night.

The former mayor went back to the house on Monday morning and received word that his wife had not returned.

2 rebs slain in clash after end of truce

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Two New People's Army rebels were killed while two Army soldiers were wounded in an encounter in Umingan, Pangasinan, on Tuesday, reports said.

The encounter, which erupted in Barangay Masiil-siil in Umingan, was the first reported clash in Northern and Central Luzon after a ceasefire agreement between the government and the NPA ended Jan. 6, according to Brig. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division in Nueva Ecija.

Braganza said the two slain rebels had yet to be identified.

He said the wounded Army corporals, identified only by their surnames Fulgencio and Gayla, were out of danger on Wednesday.

No civilians were reported hurt or killed in the 20-minute gunfight that began at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Braganza, speaking to the INQUIRER by phone from Pangasinan, said a platoon of soldiers was patrolling the village when it encountered 15 rebels.

The rebels, according to reports, belonged to a regional unit of the Josepino Corpuz Command operating in nearby Central Luzon. The unit is said to be operating in eastern Pangasinan, near the boundary of Nueva Vizcaya.

Government soldiers reported seizing three Armalite rifles, bullets and anti-government documents at the encounter site.

Additional Army forces were sent to the Pangasinan-Nueva Vizcaya eastern border on Tuesday night to seal off the area and hunt down the fleeing rebels, Braganza said.

In Lucena City, the military's Southern Luzon Command said four suspected NPA rebels belonging to the "custodial force" of former NPA prisoner Army Maj. Noel Buan surrendered in Oriental Mindoro on Tuesday.

Maj. Gerard Velez, Solcom spokesperson, identified the rebel-returnees as Lito Gunda alias Kumander Majalong, alleged assistant secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines/NPA provincial committee; Richard "Ka Waway" Palla, platoon leader; Godofredo "Ka Rey" Mapacpac and Ernie "Ka Jencel" Badu, both members of the Samahang Yunit Pampropaganda. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Dads ordered nabbed for absences

COTABATO CITY—For the first time in history, a presiding officer of a city council in Mindanao has ordered the police to "physically bring" five council members who allegedly refused to attend council sessions.

Vice Mayor Japal Guiani Jr., Sangguniang Panlungsod presiding officer, on Tuesday directed his sergeant-at-arms and the police to bring Councilors Kus Taha, Anwar Malang, Haron Felmin, Alexis Costales and Bruce Matabalao to the session hall.

But the police returned empty-handed.

Guiani was fuming when he learned that the five lawmakers did not attend the session at 9 a.m. Tuesday without even sending a message of excuse to his office.

It was supposed to be the SP's first session this year.

Due to the lack of quorum, the morning session was adjourned and Guiani ordered the next session to be held in the afternoon. Those absent earlier would be fetched by police authorities.

Councilors Malang, Taha, Matabalao, Costales and Felmin did not show up. Matabalao went to Davao, Costales and Malang were both out of town, while Taha and Felmin were in the city but did not report for work.

"It was a deliberate act," Guiani told reporters.

"They have the responsibility to serve our people. Some are politicking this early although elections are two years away."

Malang denied that he deliberately made himself unavailable. "I had an emergency family affair, we have to go out of town," he said.

"There's no big deal here," he added.

But Taha, Malang's partymate in the Lakas-NUCD, admitted that his absence was deliberate.

"I was on my way to the session hall when someone reliable sent me a text message saying I will be sacked as chair of the market committee as a show of protest, I did not show up," Taha said.

In yesterday's special session, only Costales was absent. The councilor could not be reached for comment.

A source said Guiani pushed for a reorganization of committee chairmanships because "some" were sleeping on their jobs."

Guiani was asking for accomplishment reports from committee chairs, but many could not produce the reports "because they have nothing to report," the same source said. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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TRUE PEOPLE POWER

We shall soon celebrate the first anniversary of the Second EDSA People Power Revolution or what is popularly called EDSA Dos. I chose the word "celebrate" because that is indeed what we must do. We must celebrate the goodness of God. We must celebrate the heroism of the Filipino people. We must celebrate the faith and courage of those hundreds of thousands of black clad Filipinos who kept vigil at the EDSA Shrine to rally for the return of morality in the conduct of public office. We must celebrate the steadfast love of the Blessed Mother who kept vigil with us at the EDSA Shrine during our EDSA Dos days. We must celebrate the invigorating energy of the youth. We must celebrate the kindness of God and the greatness of the Filipino.

Within the year past, we had a major political upheaval in what we now call EDSA Tres. I saw once again how the power of prayer is most essential for people power to succeed. The essence of people power is not socio-political change. The core of people power is prayer power. It is God power. It is Mary power. The events of the first of May 2001 also saw the strength of the new political dispensation to maintain order against all odds.

Since May 2001, the government has not really been given a chance to do its task for the people undisturbed. There are persistent rumors of coup d'etat, agitation of the poor, the dragging court case against the former President and cases of drug trafficking that keep on hovering over the heads of high ranking people in government.

We have seen one controversy after another taking up space in our dailies. The people are tired. The unending political controversies are making us more and more convinced that present politics is indeed dirty.

Politics by itself is not dirty. It is good. It is ordained for the good of the people. It is people who run politics who make it dirty.

Our current national situation is far from ideal. It needs a lot of improvement. The problem is not only in the leadership. The problem is also in ourselves. The problem is not in the stars but in our hearts. If the present government is to be attentive to the needs of our times, it must focus on two neglected sectors of our society—the poor and the youth.

EDSA Dos showcased the youth seeking renewal, challenging the adults to give them inspiring examples. EDSA Tres was the voice of the neglected and marginalized poor who felt that they were just being used and not given equal opportunities to be productive for society.

I call on everybody—politicians, church people, businessmen, teachers—to give the poor and the youth preferential option and attention. I still need to see concrete programs to improve housing for the poor, quality education for the youth and job opportunities for a bigger sector of our society.

We do not need another mockery and abuse of people power. What we need is change of attitudes, a conversion of hearts, a spirit of unity, a common vision and a spirit of selfless love of God, country and people.

Villa San Miguel, January 9, 2002.

+ Jaime Card. Sin

✠ **JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN, DD**
Archbishop of Manila

FVR men hit GMA for lack of governance

(From page A1)

But the influential Manila archbishop also called on the people, especially those critical of the year-old administration, to give it a chance to succeed and fulfill its promises.

"Our current political situation is far from ideal. It needs a lot of improvement," Sin said in a statement titled "True People Power" and issued in connection with the upcoming commemoration of Edsa I and II.

But he added: "The problem is not only in the leadership. The problem is in ourselves. The problem is not in the stars but in our hearts."

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for the President, countered that Abat and other critics were mistaken in thinking that her actions were geared only toward her election.

"The President is focused, and she's focused on the economy," he said.

Tiglao said not once had the President asked the Cabinet to assess how her programs would have an impact on the 2004 polls. "It's not even talked about in smaller meetings in Malacañang," he said.

He also denied that Malacañang was seeking an audience with its most vocal critics, Linda Montayre and Salvador Enriquez, secretary general and chair of the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA).

In a chance interview with Palace reporters after his briefing, Tiglao said Sin's statement was "fair" and "good" and not a criticism of the administration.

He pointed out that the ills besetting the country were an accumulation of problems built up through three decades.

'Business is bad'

Abat, who now heads the government-owned Poro Point-Camp John Hay Development Corp., said that from his conversations with private citizens, "even businessmen—who are people with money—are saying that business is bad."

He said the President should not worry too much about 2004 "because she doesn't have to tell the people, 'Vote for me,' if she does her job well."

"By going around the country like she's doing now, is she achieving something?" he said. "Instead of focusing on 2004, she should continue to govern well and achieve because it's her achievements that shall speak for her in the election."

Abat, a former ambassador, was the last defense secretary of President Fidel V. Ramos. His views echo those earlier expressed by the PCA's Enriquez, who served as Ramos' budget and finance secretary.

His Forces is the only organization with which the ex-President claims affiliation aside from the Ramos Peace and Development Foundation.

Abat said the government and its military commanders should not take the reported demoralization in the Armed Forces lightly because "it can be contagious."

But he stressed that he had not heard of grumbling within the military. "If there were grumbling, superior officers should take action and find out the cause," he said.

Nothing concrete

Cardinal Sin noted that nothing concrete had been done to help those who contributed much to Edsa II—the poor and the youth, who, he said, need "preferential option and attention."

"I still need to see concrete programs to improve housing for the poor, quality education for the youth, and job opportunities for a bigger sector of our society," he said.

"Edsa Dos showcased the youth seeking renewal, challenging the adults to give them inspiring examples," Sin said. "Edsa Tres was the voice of the neglected and marginalized poor who felt that they were just being used and not given equal opportunities to be productive for society."

But the Cardinal pointed out that "the government has not really been given a chance to do its task for the people undisturbed."

He said the government had its hands full with the "persistent rumors of coup d'etat, agitation of the poor, the dragging court case against (Estrada) and cases of drug trafficking."

He also said "the people are tired" of "unending political controversies."

Still, Sin said, the solution to these problems was not a coup plot or another people power uprising, but change in people's hearts.

"We do not need another mockery and abuse of people power," he said. "What we need is a change of attitudes, a conversion of hearts, a spirit of unity, a common vision and a spirit of selfless love of God, country and people."

Civilian-military junta

The PCA's Montayre yesterday said there was a strong clamor from various sectors for a civilian-military junta to effect serious reforms in governance.

She said that after two people power revolts, the people wanted to give the military a bigger role in governance, to provide a "disciplined and strict kind of leadership, but at the same time democratic."

Only this kind of political setup can avert chaos similar to that in Argentina, she said.

Montayre cited the "rampaging disparity" between the rich and the poor, and reiterated her call for the President to resign for the alleged inability to attend to this problem.

But Jose Almonte, Ramos' former national security adviser, is not sold on the idea of a civilian-military junta.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Almonte said he saw "no compelling moral basis" for such an idea.

"I feel the people will not support the idea on the basis of a vacuum," he said. "They must have a compelling reason."

But Almonte said he supported the call for reforms in the government.

"The people power provision (in the Constitution) should be strengthened so the people can have power over the presidency at any time," he said.

Almonte was referring to the provision in the 1987 Constitution that provides for a people's initiative mechanism to enable them to remove barangay and local government officials from office for graft or incompetence.

He said Congress should strengthen such laws to enable people to legally remove bad presidents or retain or allow the good ones to run again.

"If a president is corrupt and incompetent, the people should not wait for six years to remove him. If he is good, the people can make exemptions and make him run again," Almonte said.

He said he also wanted to see economic reforms to "increase the capacity of Filipinos to create and increase wealth" and to "address barriers to productivity."

He declined to pass judgment on the administration's performance, saying he was giving the President one-and-a-half years to show competent governance.

Military mouthpiece

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) assailed the PCA, calling it a mouthpiece for the military.

Bayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño said the PCA had been misdirecting legitimate issues against the Macapagal administration toward a civilian-military junta.

"There's no clamor whatsoever for a civilian-military junta except in the minds of Ramos, Almonte and their coterie of spokespersons in the PCA," Casiño said.

"Hiding behind a veneer of constitutionalism, these militarists have not put to rest their dream of taking over the country and foisting their own regime of corruption, fascism and puppetry to foreign interests along the lines of unlamented military dictators like Suharto, Noriega, Pinochet, etc.," he added.

Casiño urged "right-minded members" of the PCA to "bolt the group and distance themselves from the militarist posturing and coup noises of their leaders.

He said the civilian-military junta being espoused by Montayre, Enriquez and the PCA was but another term for a "fascist dictatorship" similar to that of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Casiño also criticized Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. for justifying military involvement in putsches, describing the senator's statements Tuesday as "direct contempt of people power."

"(His statements) reflect views that dangerously rewrite history, so that the military's role in keeping Marcos and Estrada in power is glossed over and the (AFP) is misportrayed as the people's savior," Casiño said.

Magsaysay had said military involvement in overthrowing the government would be justified if the people themselves could not rise as one in seeking dramatic reforms.

But he had stressed that he was not condoning military involvement in the supposed coup plot against the administration.

Nevertheless, Casiño reminded Magsaysay that in People Power I and II, the military was the last to leave Marcos and Estrada "after long periods of serving as the disgraced leaders' defenders."

"The military is not exactly spotless, trustworthy, untouched by corruption or fit to govern," he said.

Deadweight

But Magsaysay had more to say yesterday: The President should get rid of the deadweight in her administration.

"I think this is a good time for her to look at her Cabinet and (determine) those who are performing well and those who are laggards," said the chair of the Senate committee on defense and national security.

Magsaysay took issue with the claim of some members of civil society that the President was campaigning for the 2004 election and not paying attention to the country's problems.

"You know, there's a thin line between campaigning and inspecting (projects)," he said. "She is not campaigning *per se* because she does not talk politics. She shows the people that she's concerned about what's happening in their areas regarding public works or some peace and order problems."

Magsaysay said Tuesday that the military was highly politicized—a statement that AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan contested yesterday.

According to Adan, the military merely gives "advice" to national leaders "in pursuit of the national interest." ***With reports from Andrea Trinidad-Echavez, Cynthia D. Balana and Martin P. Marfil***

No-frills rites . . .

(From page A1)

ers that culminated in the attack on Malacañang last May 1.

A Palace statement quoted Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman as telling the Cabinet on Tuesday that twin celebrations would be held—one on Jan. 16-20 to commemorate the ousting last year of Estrada, and the other on Feb. 21-25 to mark the 1986 uprising that toppled strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

The Macapagal administration wants to "bring Edsa I and II to the hearts and minds of the poor," Tiglao said.

"The main attraction of the celebration is the message that Edsa I and II are all about the ordinary *masa*," he said.

Witness traces Velarde commission

BY VOLT CONTRERAS

DID the P189.7-million check allegedly representing Joseph Estrada's commission from the sale of Belle Corp. shares really end up at the infamous Jose Velarde account?

Yes and no, as yesterday's plunder hearing of the deposed President showed.

Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said the check, issued after the sale of Belle shares to the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System in October 1999, was first deposited in the account of Estrada pal Jaime Dichaves at the Cubao branch of Far East Bank.

Dichaves would later issue a Far East check "with the same amount" for deposit in the Velarde account, which was in Equitable PCI Bank, Zuño told reporters.

Zuño wondered aloud: Why would Dichaves still transfer the money from his Far East account to the Velarde account if he also owned the latter—as claimed by the Estrada camp?

He gave this narrative off-court as a postscript to what prosecution witness Willie Ng Ocier, Belle vice president, covered yesterday in the continuation of his direct examination.

At the stand, Ocier was asked what happened to the International Exchange Bank check allegedly representing Estrada's commission after he handed it over to Dichaves shortly after the stocks were sold.

Ocier said it was only after Estrada got kicked out of power in January 2001 that he learned of its whereabouts—when he read an old issue of the defunct Pinoy Times newspaper.

The issue dated Jan. 21-27 (Pinoy Times still a weekly then) carried a scoop revealing the contents of the fateful "second envelope" of the aborted Estrada impeachment trial.

In that issue, he recalled, he saw the "list of checks" deposited into the Velarde account allegedly owned by Estrada.

But Ocier grew "curious" when he noticed one entry to be "P189.7 million"—exactly the amount in the I-Bank check (dated Nov. 5, 1999) he gave to Dichaves for Estrada's alleged commission.

He then checked with Eastern Securities and Development Corp., the brokerage firm from which the funds for the check were drawn, and was told that the I-Bank check in question was not actually deposited in the Velarde account at Equitable but at the Far East Bank.

(Eastern is the firm where SSI Management, the original owner of the bloc of Belle shares bought by SSS and GSIS, maintained an account, Ocier said in previous hearings.)

The Far East account, Ocier said, was Jose Dichaves'.

Zuño, in a post-hearing interview, said another set of witnesses from Far East and Equitable PCI Bank would testify how the P189.7 million from the Dichaves' Far East account moved to the Velarde account.

In effect, the money took a "detour" before going to the Velarde account, he explained.

But the prosecution's presentation of the old Pinoy Times issue as part of Ocier's testimony drew strong objections from defense lawyers who argued that press materials amount to "hearsay" in court proceedings.

The Sandiganbayan's 3rd Division justices led by acting chair Teresita Leonardo de Castro practically flipped-flop on the issue.

The magistrates initially refused to accept Ocier's testimonies based on what he read from the paper, saying it was not indicative of his personal knowledge of what happened to the I-Bank check.

But the court later agreed to admit it on the condition that prosecutors would later "connect" Ocier's account to issue of the check's whereabouts.

Allowed to continue at this point, Ocier said Far East later sent the check back to Eastern Securities after the amount of P189.7 million had been deposited.

The check had been marked as a prosecution evidence during Monday's hearing.

EDWIN BACASMAS

PLEASE come in, Mr. Prime Minister, the President gestures toward the entrance of the Palace to the Japanese head of state, Junichiro Koizumi.

Koizumi proposes . . .

(From page A1)

Macapagal praised Koizumi's proposal but stopped short of commenting further.

Koizumi said the planned alliance might include a free trade accord. In October, Japan and Singapore completed negotiations to launch a bilateral free trade accord, the first ever for the world's second-biggest economy.

Analysts said Koizumi planned to use this trip to boost Japan's profile in the region in a bid to counter China's intensified dialogue with Asean members.

Japan was left out in the cold last November when China and Asean agreed to create the world's most populous free trade bloc within 10 years, covering two billion consumers.

"I conveyed my message that we would like to cooperate with Asean as open and sincere partners so that we can act together and advance together in the future," Koizumi told a joint news conference with Ms Macapagal after their talks.

He said: "We were able to confirm our common understanding on various issues and agreed to continue our cooperation. This is significant and wonderful for the two countries, Asean and the entire region."

Ms Macapagal said she and Koizumi agreed on the need for Asean and Japan to forge closer links in addressing issues and problems affecting the region.

"I welcome Prime Minister Koizumi's new foreign policy vision for East Asia," Ms Macapagal said.

She backed Koizumi's effort to revamp the troubled Japanese economy, saying Tokyo's recovery was key to growth in the entire region.

During his flight to Manila, Koizumi told reporters he planned to use the Asean trip to express his readiness to take concrete action for Japan to become a true partner of Asean.

Tokyo wanted to demonstrate that "a friend in need is a friend indeed," he said.

"As a frank partner, I would like to look for cooperative relations, considering how Japan-Asean ties can contribute to the peace and stability of the international community," he added.

About 50 protesters, made up mostly of Japanese sex slaves during World War II, greeted Koizumi upon his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport early Wednesday afternoon.

Policemen and members of the Presidential Security Group also guarded the motorcade route as other demonstrators gathered near Luneta where Koizumi laid a wreath by the monument of national hero Jose Rizal.

The leftists and women's groups were protesting Japan's occupation of the Philippines in World War II.

"Never again will Filipinos accept Japan's new bid to establish itself as an imperialist power in the region," said a leaflet they distributed at the site.

Workers also complained that Japanese aid investments in the country had led to displacement of families and aggravated labor conditions in Southern Tagalog.

A small group of demonstrators also held a rally at the foot of the Don Chino Roces Bridge outside Malacañang as Koizumi was being given full military honors.

Today, Koizumi flies to Kuala Lumpur to meet Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad before moving on to Bangkok on Friday to meet Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Koizumi will hold talks with Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri in Jakarta on Saturday and meet Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on Sunday before returning to Tokyo on Jan. 15. ***Reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Gerald Lacuarta, Norman Bordadora, AP, AFP and Reuters***

Chief Erap guard fired over lavish holiday bash

(From page A1)

guests won free plane tickets to Hong Kong, television sets, refrigerators and washing machines.

A government television station said more than 50 guests attended the party.

Police said the carousing was held without the anti-graft court's knowledge or authorization.

"This is a clear violation of specific instructions from my office and also from the court, so we are conducting an investigation right now," Director General Leandro Mendoza, the Philippine National Police chief, said on government television.

"The old set of guards failed to observe procedure. They have already been removed and relieved and transferred to other assignments," Interior Secretary Jose Lina added.

The relief of Flores stemmed from Estrada's interview on TV on Dec. 28 in which he reportedly slammed the Macapagal administration for failing to deliver on its promises to the people.

That day, the PNP had granted the request of Estrada's son, Jinggoy, to hold a press conference to promote the movie "Peks Man, Walang Iwanan," in which he co-starred with young actress Judy Ann Santos.

During the presscon, Estrada strode in and was interviewed by a TV reporter.

"That was all we granted; not Estrada's interview," said Director Thompson Lantion, outgoing head of the Directorate for Police Community Relations.

Flores has been replaced by Chief Supt. Rosalio Magsino and is now on floating status. His relief, some said, was an offshoot of his men's lapses.

Policemen under Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, chief of the PNP Headquarters Support Services, have taken over as "custodial force" of the Estradas from the PSPO personnel.

The custodial force is in charge of enforcing rules regarding the detention of the Estradas at the VMMC.

Until the incident, PSPO personnel also served as a custodial force. Now, PSPO is only in charge of the overall security and protection of the Estradas while at the VMMC and while going to and from the Sandiganbayan, according to Magsino.

Apart from the PSPO, members of the Central Police District and the Special Action Force (SAF) also provide security to the Estradas at the VMMC.

Stringent measures

Estrada's lawyer Raymond Fortun said the new security detail restricted his client's access to the outside world. Personal interviews by journalists have been curtailed, he added, denouncing the new restrictions as "cruel."

The opposition Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) also denounced the new security measures.

In a statement, PMP spokesperson Jesus Crispin Remulla said the new security measures, which allow visitation rights solely to Estrada's direct family members and his lawyers, were a blatant violation of Estrada's human rights.

Remulla also objected to the PNP's new security arrangement which requires Estrada to have his meals at the corridor directly outside his hospital room in an obvious attempt to eavesdrop on his conversations. ***With a report from AFP***

Roco posters teachers' pet peeve

(From page A1)

. According to leaders of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the Department of Education (DepEd) is printing 350,000 copies of Roco posters worth P1.4 million and they suspect it is part of his reported bid for the 2004 presidential election.

Yesterday, ACT chair Enrique Torres and secretary general Flora Arellano asked the House of Representatives to investigate at least two irregularities in the DepEd totaling P5.2 million. These are the printing of what ACT believes to be the advanced campaign posters of Roco and the hiring of 19 consultants for P3.8 million although the department's budget allotted only P1.8 million for it.

Torres said the "questionable expenses" were incurred by Roco last year.

Torres said DepEd resident auditor Flerida Jimenez had asked Roco for a justification of the posters but Roco had yet to explain.

'Not for public welfare'

Jimenez, according to Torres, criticized the posters for "having no connection to the recognized objectives of DepEd nor (were) they for the support of the government or the promotion of public welfare."

"While it may be true that the posters depicted messages to the graduates, there are more important needs in the schools like school desks and books," Jimenez said in an audit observation memo to Undersecretary Ernesto Pangan.

Torres said the poster had a photograph of Roco and the vision and mission of DepEd.

Torres said the P5.2 million could be used to build 16,136 additional classrooms or buy 43,704 school desks.

"If the purpose of the DepEd is to alleviate the plight of teachers and students, they should prioritize shortages in classrooms, desks, textbooks and hiring of more teachers," Torres said.

'He should explain'

The ACT leaders made the call for a House inquiry during a joint press conference of Rep. Jesli Lapus and Akbayan partylist Rep. Loretta Rosales about the inclusion in the 2002 budget of a provision prohibiting automatic deductions in teachers' salaries.

Rosales was hesitant when reporters asked if she would file a resolution to pave the way for a House investigation.

"In all fairness to Secretary Roco, if he wants to show that he is not campaigning he should come out (to explain)," Rosales said.

Roco is widely believed to be a contender for the 2004 presidential elections.

No more automatic deductions

Rosales was more interested in stressing the importance of Section 36 of the General Appropriations Act of 2002, which is due for signing when Congress resumes session on Monday.

That provision prohibits automatic deductions in teachers' salaries as payment for their loans. It mandated that the take home pay of teachers should not be lower than P3,000 a month.

The lowest-ranking teacher receives a monthly salary of P9,939.

Rosales said she was initially worried about the alleged lobbying by private lending institutions for President Macapagal-Arroyo to veto Section 36.

But Rosales said Ms Macapagal personally assured her during cocktails on Saturday hosted by the President for members of Congress and the diplomatic corps that she would not veto Section 36.

"She told me succinctly, 'Etta, I will respect Congress. If Congress inserted Section 36, I'm very sure I'm not going to veto it,'" Rosales said.

Lapus, who had been advocating the removal of the practice since the previous Congress, said the automatic salary deductions were the "largest legalized racket going on for the past 20 years."

Lapus said an estimated P15 billion annually was being deducted through the DepEd payroll system from teachers' salaries. These are payments for the principal and interest of loans incurred by teachers from private lending institutions.

Lapus said the system prevailed because the private lending institutions paid 2 percent of the huge amount as "service fee" to the DepEd.

(Ed's note: According to an INQUIRER report in November, a classroom built by the Department of Public Works and Highways costs P325,000. At this amount, The DepEd's "questionable expense" of P5.2 million can only build 16 classrooms.)

The rise and fall of the man they call 'Ma-as'

(From page A1)

"Project Merdeka," with the objective of attacking Sabah or North Borneo.

But in 1971, Misuari ran in the elections for delegates to the Constitutional Convention and lost. He then concentrated on recruiting Muslim youths in Sulu and all over Mindanao, setting up strategic camps in several provinces.

Sabah

It is not clear, to this day, just how these camps were funded, or where the logistics came from. But according to other accounts, Misuari had by then established a kind of alliance with top officials in the state of Sabah.

This was confirmed when the most promising among the recruits were sent to Malaysia for training in guerrilla warfare, ballistics, ordnance and jungle survival.

And a week after the proclamation of martial law on Sept. 21, 1972, Misuari's name was in the list of wanted persons announced over the government radio stations. He had a P100,000 price on his head. But he had also fled to Malaysia.

The months following were marked by pocket skirmishes all over Mindanao between government forces and what was now known as the MNLF.

But in the outlying towns of Sulu, they were generally referred to as "Maoists." This was mainly due to the constant references to Maoist teachings in the underlying ideology of the lectures and teach-ins that Misuari and his close allies conducted.

As a political science professor in the University of the Philippines, Misuari had been a prominent member of the Kabataang Makabayan organized by Jose Ma. Sison, until they had a falling-out.

But necessary to the acceptance and strengthening of the movement was a reformulation of its ideological underpinnings, from an atheistic philosophy which was anathema to Islam, to one that would weld its principles of empowerment to the masses and the socialist dimension of Quranic teachings.

The matrix

The conflict situation in Mindanao proved to be the perfect matrix for cultivating the emerging homegrown doctrine.

The military was viewed as ally of the anti-Muslim armed groups like the Ilaga of the Ilonggo settlers.

The massacres of Muslim villagers and the destruction of mosques by both the military and the Christian vigilantes only reinforced the charges of genocide and ethnic cleansing being committed by Marcos' martial law regime against the predominantly Muslim tribal groups.

Islam and the *ummah* (community) were imperiled, and thousands of people readily offered their lives in defense of the faith, homeland and race; "victory or the grave" became the battlecry. It was *fi-sabilillah* (In the Way of Allah) and the members of the movement became legitimate mujahideen.

The worldwide *dar-ul* Islam was obligated to render assistance to oppressed Muslim brothers on the other side of the globe. First Libya, and then the rest of the 56 member-nations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

With its confidence bolstered by thousands of fighters equipped with modern war materiel, the MNLF launched sporadic offensives against the military, but the most devastating was the attack allegedly ordered by Misuari on the town of Jolo on Feb. 7, 1974.

After failed talks during the administration of Corazon Aquino who nevertheless was able to establish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, then President Fidel Ramos renewed the peace process with the MNLF, which culminated, finally, in the peace agreement.

Misuari returned to the country and ran uncontested for governor of the ARMM amid high hopes and expectations.

But soon, it became evident that the fabled revolutionary leader could not measure up as government official and administrator. Charges of misappropriation and squandering of funds, incompetence, nepotism and absenteeism surfaced.

At the end of his three-year term and an additional year on an extended term, the observation was that nothing had been achieved by Misuari's administration. The few projects that had been started remained unfinished, and the general socioeconomic situation of the ARMM deteriorated from bad to worse.

Accounting

Worst still was the problem of peace and order, as the Abu Sayyaf, which, according to published studies, sprang like Athena's head from the MNLF, went on kidnapping sprees and engaged the government forces in skirmishes that resulted in many more killed on both sides.

When some legislators demanded an accounting of the billions of funds allotted to his office, Misuari left the country and was unseen for several months.

After reportedly having been denied a visa by Libya where the OIC's Committee of the Eight was meeting, Misuari returned to the country and shortly after convened the "4th Congress" in April.

Stripped of his powers by the Central Committee and replaced by a 15-member Executive Council, Misuari also faced the expiration of his term as governor when Congress approved the holding of regional elections on Nov. 26.

Failing in his efforts to forestall the polls, Misuari sought refuge in Jolo. On Nov. 3, he convened a "5th Bangsamoro Congress" in Silangkan, the hometown of his wife Tarhata, where he renewed his bid for an independent "Bangsamoro Republik."

'Mutallah'

On the dawn of Nov. 19, the fourth day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Misuari's forces, now known as "Mutallah," launched attacks on the Army brigade headquarters and other police and military outposts.

The government suspended the ARMM governor and charged him and several others with rebellion for allegedly ordering the attacks that were carried out reportedly in alliance with the Abu Sayyaf.

On Nov. 26, Misuari and six of his "cohorts" were arrested for illegal entry by Malaysian authorities on Jampiras Island.

To the true ideologues who had long turned their backs against him, it was the sad end of a dream for which they had given their youth and the best years of their lives. To those who suffered as a consequence of that dream, it was retribution.

To many others, it was poetic justice. Jampiras Island was the main training camp where Misuari led the best and brightest among the Moro youth to pursue a cause that they now say he himself, tragically, betrayed.

Malacañang, Danding strike deal on SMC

(From page A1)

In exchange, the government will allow Cojuangco, the SMC chair, to continue to run the beer and food conglomerate although the government will have a say in the operations of SMC and its subsidiaries in matters like bidding and salaries of top executives.

The "interim agreement" also provides that the government will not oppose the deal entered into between Kirin Co. and the SMC management over the sale of 15 percent of SMC to the Japanese brewer.

The agreement will reportedly be in effect for two years, or until the courts have decided on the coco levy cases, whichever comes earlier.

"It's not a compromise deal. It's a cooperative settlement," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

For farmers' sake

Tiglao said "the government and the group of Mr. Cojuangco have agreed to cooperate for the sake of the company and the coconut farmers."

"We don't want to disturb the private operations of San Miguel, but we want to protect the farmers' interest, to make sure the (27-percent block of) shares is still intact," he said.

The government and Cojuangco want to finalize the "interim agreement" before Feb. 27, when SMC stockholders are expected to ratify the entry of Kirin into the company.

"There's an agreement in principle that the government will not oppose the Kirin investment. But details (of the interim agreement) will be finalized before Feb. 27," Tiglao said.

PCGG drops objections

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) has already dropped its objections to the Kirin deal.

The PCGG initially feared that Kirin's entry would "dilute" the 27-percent stake in SMC that it had sequestered. The shares, which are under the name of 14 holding companies believed to be dummies of Marcos cronies like Cojuangco, Juan Ponce Enrile and Maria Clara Lobregat, were acquired using the levy funds collected from coconut farmers during the Marcos regime.

The Philippine Coconut Producers Federation (Cocofed) claims its members own the 27-percent share through the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

Tiglao said the government would no longer get the approval from the Sandiganbayan, as the PCGG's go-ahead was enough.

The government's forfeiture cases against Cojuangco and the Cocofed have been pending before the Sandiganbayan since 1986.

The PCGG claims Cojuangco's 20-percent stake in SMC was ill gotten because he acquired it using coco levy funds.

The new agreement was the product of the "review" of the SMC-Kirin deal that President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered. The review team, which was headed by Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, included PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac.

Roxas and Yorac, during the other day's Cabinet meeting, reported that they were finalizing the interim agreement with Cojuangco's group.

2004 elections

Bayan Muna partylist Rep. Satur Ocampo said the "cooperative settlement" over SMC could be a quid pro quo for the presidential elections in 2004.

"In the maneuverings for 2004, it is important for (President) Gloria (Macapagal-Arroyo) to maintain the support of such an important political ally as Danding Cojuangco of the Nationalist People's Coalition," Ocampo said.

He said the "economic concessions" granted to Cojuangco were meant to ensure that he and the NPC would support Ms Macapagal in her reelection bid.

"All along, the President was bent on a compromise with Danding on this issue as part of their alliance in the 2001 elections and possibly to ensure his support in 2004," Ocampo said.

He noted that the administration People Power Coalition won in Cojuangcos' bailiwick in Negros Occidental and that two Cojuangco sons were members of the House of Representatives.

Carlos O. Cojuangco is representative of the fourth district of Negros Occidental and Mark O. Cojuangco represents the fifth district of Pangasinan.

The NPC, which is composed of more than 50 congressmen, is part of the administration coalition in the House.

"So Danding is able to use his political clout to obtain economic concessions from the administration," Ocampo said.

He said Ms Macapagal would not want to have the NPC opposing her in 2004.

"I'm only talking about the political aspect that this is a quid pro quo," Ocampo said.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas also said that the agreement was related to Ms Macapagal's plan to run in 2004.

"This is a clear political accommodation of Cojuangco in preparation for a GMA-Cojuangco tandem in 2004," said Jim Fernando, KMP public information officer. ***With reports from Juliet L. Javellana and Gerald G. Lacuarta***

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Type		4-in line, diesel	4-in line, diesel
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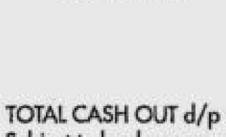

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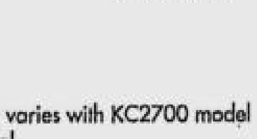

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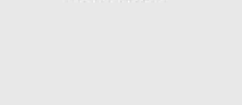

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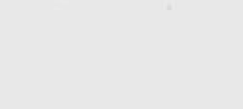

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Tanpinco grabs solo lead in int'l jungolf

ROMY HOMILLADA

FILIPINO bets Miko Arce (left) and Emerson Ang in a light moment as they walk to hole No. 9 during yesterday's 5th Philippine International Golf Junior Championship at Wack Wack.

THE PHILIPPINES' JR Tanpinco carded a struggling 77 yesterday but it was enough to wrest the Special Division solo lead midway the fifth Philippine International Junior Golf Championship.

And compatriot Jenz Tecson also struggled with an 82, but like Tanpinco, he remained in contention for the Class A crown together with Thailand's Panuwant Muenlek.

Tanpinco's 77 was five over at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's 6,674-yard (from the blue tees) East course in a round played under windy condition and compounded by tough pin placements and fast greens.

"Considering the conditions out there, not to mention one mistake I made before the round, 77 was good enough," said Tanpinco, the defending champion from Bacolod City.

Tanpinco's mistake was forgetting his golf shoes as he left the Dasmariñas Village home of Justin Limjap, where he was staying. He discovered this with only 20 minutes before his tee-time.

It turned out tournament director Gerard Cantada was Tanpinco's saviour. "Since he made a hole-in-one yesterday, I just gave him a new pair as his prize," said Cantada .

Together with his ace-aided first round 75, Tanpinco, 20, and a La Salle Bacolod sophomore, will start today's third round with a five-shot lead at 152.

Thailand's Sanawong Tepphatud limped home with an 82 to go with a first-day 75 to go down to second behind Tanpinco at 157, followed by compatriot Wutti Amrtarachotilmul with an 87 and 164.

Muenlek made an 81 to go with an earlier 80 to tie Tecson at 161 in the annual event organized by Philippine Junior Golf Federation headed by Boy Cantada and hosted by Wack Wack headed by its president Ben Abalos.

Woods fires 65

PARAPARAUMU BEACH, New Zealand—Tiger Woods, firing a 65, says a genuine links golf course should have the wind howling and the conditions extreme, just to make it authentic.

The way things looked Wednesday, a day ahead of the first round of the New Zealand Open, the star attraction at this year's tournament will probably get his wish.

Rain started pelting down mid-morning at the Paraparaumu Beach course as most of the pro-am competitors, including Woods, were about halfway through their rounds.

Castillo prevails

ERIC Castillo of Team Taguig topped the 1st Dragon Invitational Challenge held recently at GameworX 4th level of Festival Supermall in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Besting more than 500 entries in the first Mini-4WD race for 2002, Castillo bagged the cash prize of P15,000 and a glass trophy.

"I would like to thank the organizer of this tournament, the Komodo Dragons and GameworX Inc., for conducting a tournament like this. Hopefully, I could sustain this good start," said Castillo.

Jesse Dominguez of Team Smiley finished first runner-up to earn P3,000 plus glass trophy, while Jhonas Capili of Cavite Central settled for 2nd runner-up for P2,000 plus glass trophy.

Jun Patino of Team Maximum Speed pocketed P1,000 and a silver trophy for posting the fastest lap, while Cavite Alliance was voted best team of the tournament.

Boundless Boy

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I ADMIRE the guts of Boy Cantada. Through the years, he has been almost single-handedly staging the Philippine International Junior Golf Championship. The fifth edition is now ongoing at Wack Wack. Nearly 10 Asian countries have sent in youngsters for the tournament that had its historic inaugurals in Bacolod in 1998.

Here's a glass to Boy's supporters. They've stood by him because they know, for sure, that when Boy does something, he gives it his all. Boy produces results and that makes for a good leader.

Boy has had dark moments nursing his babe. But through it all, he was able to lick them. His spunk has put him in good stead always.

He's had critics—lots of them. But somehow, through an unbending will and an uncompromising stance amid adversities, he would always come out triumphant in the end. Critics would end up eating their own words.

Boy hates the limelight. He works quietly. He practices to the hilt the credo "self-reliance." Sure, he seeks help from friends. But when help is unavailable, he will not sulk. Always, he'll find ways to plug holes. Leaks? Under his watch, rarely do they occur.

Years ago, Boy's critics said he was into golf mainly because his son, Gerard, was a junior golfer. They labeled him a "stage father."

They were mistaken, of course.

Not many know this but Gerard stuck to golf early on largely on the proddings of the late Joe Cantada. Joe, in case you still don't know, is definitely the best Filipino sportscaster of all time. Gerard being Joe's favorite nephew, Joe Cantada followed the kid's golf career every step of the way. A death wish for Joe, who succumbed to cancer, was: Gerard, please continue putting the Philippines in the world map through your golf exploits. So, from his jungolf days, Gerard went on to play for the country in men's amateur competitions abroad.

After Gerard's jungolf days were over, Boy never wavered in his dream to make golf a bridge to mould character for kids wanting to pick up the game. He has not stopped forming jungolf teams for competitions abroad (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Fiji Islands, the United States and Australia, etc.).

Today, father and son have become inseparable partners in propagating the game of golf; they even have a Sunday TV golf show.

For almost a decade now, Boy flies yearly to Cessnook in Australia, kids in tow. He would happily unleash them there like they were his own sons; their stints at the world-famed Jack Newton International Golf championships help hone their skills for future battles. During the last four years or so, Gerard was Boy's team captain for the RP Team.

Last year, Gerard broke new ground when he played his first professional tournament. He finished a fighting fourth in the 86th Philippine Open at Wack Wack. But what stood out from that pro debut was Gerard's gesture of donating half of his prize money to victims of the Mayon Volcano eruption.

"That decision was his and his alone," Boy would tell me of Gerard's benevolence. "As I said, golf has always been a good educator. I'm proud of my son."

Too bad I didn't have the power to choose honorees for tomorrow's PSA Awards. Otherwise, I would have made Boy "Mr. Golfer of the Year."

Rotary tilt stakes Benz for an ace

A SMART Mercedes Benz will be the main hole-in-one prize in eight par-3 holes of the two venues of the 16th Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines (RGFFP) set Jan. 16-20 in Baguio City.

The luxurious Mercedes Benz donated by Rtn. Sevie Oliva of I-cars.com sales will be at stake in four par-3 holes of the Baguio Country Club and the same number of par-3s at the neighboring Club John Hay course.

Due to numerous requests from various Rotary clubs, the RGFFP has decided to extend the early bird discount tournament rate of P3,500 per player to Friday, Jan. 11.

As participation has already breached the 30-team mark, more than 300 players are expected to go up to Baguio which is now experiencing its coldest climates in years for the annual tourney.

RGFFP chair Oscar de Venecia, meanwhile, lauded the continued support of companies to the foundation led by Taylor Made Adidas, General Nutrition Center, Menzi & Company, Merisant Phils., Inc., Classica Suites, Inc., San Miguel Corporation, Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club and Ultra Promo Craft.

Registration is P3,500 if paid before Jan. 11 and P4,000 after Jan. 11. Tournament fee for guests is P4,000. For inquiries and registration, please call tournament director Pancho Perea or Erica Alvarez-Pekson of RGFFP Secretariat at tel. 7218896 and 721-0564.

MJ lifts Wizards over Clippers; Lakers cruise to 5th straight win

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan had 18 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists Tuesday to lead the Washington Wizards to a 96-88 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

The win was a reversal of last year's Wizards-Clipper meeting at the MCI Center, which saw Jordan throw a tantrum in the owners' box as Washington's director of basketball operations while watching the Wizards blow a 21-point lead and lose.

Tuesday's victory was the fourth consecutive win for the Wizards (18-14) and moved them to within one victory of their total from all last season.

Jordan recovered from a 1-for-8 first quarter to make nine of 24 shots in 42 minutes. Popeye Jones grabbed a season-high 16 points, Chris Whitney had 18 and Hubert Davis 16 for the Wizards.

Jeff McInnis scored a season-high 27 points to lead the Clippers.

Lakers 121, Pistons 92

In Auburn, Michigan, Shaquille O'Neal scored 28 points and Kobe Bryant had 20 - then both sat out the entire fourth quarter - as Los Angeles won its fifth consecutive game.

Jerry Stackhouse led the Pistons with 27 points. Detroit (16-17) has lost 11 of 13 games to fall below .500 for the first time since opening night.

O'Neal played 25 minutes in his third game after missing the previous five with an arthritic toe. He went 11-of-17 from the field, 6-of-10 on free throws, had 10 rebounds and made three assists.

Mavs owner fined $.5M

NEW YORK—Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban was fined $500,000 by the NBA on Tuesday for repeated public criticism of game officials.

Cuban's most recent criticism came after the Mavericks lost to San Antonio 105-103 on Saturday.

The Dallas owner was fined seven times by NBA commissioner David Stern last season for a total of $505,000. His largest previous fine was $250,000.

This was the largest fine for an individual in NBA history, the league said.

The largest team fine was the $3.5 million Stern imposed on the Minnesota Timberwolves on Oct. 25, 2000 for making a secret deal with star forward Joe Smith. Stern also voided Smith's contract and stripped Minnesota of five first-round draft choices. He later restored one of the picks.

The largest fine for an individual in all sports was $ 1 million. NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue fined Eddie DeBartolo, the co-owner of the San Francisco 49ers, on March 16, 1999, for being involved in a Louisiana gambling fraud case. Tagliabue also extended DeBartolo's NFL banishment until at least February 2000. DeBartolo remains out of the league.

Carter, O'Neal top polls

NEW YORK—Vince Carter of the Toronto Raptors and Shaquille O'Neal of the Los Angeles Lakers held their leads in NBA All-Star balloting Tuesday.

Carter tops all players with 920,020 votes. Boston's Antoine Walker (301,153) overtook Orlando's Grant Hill for second place among Eastern Conference forwards. Hill is out for the season with an ankle injury.

COMPLETE RESULTS

Washington 96, L.A. Clippers 88; Atlanta 101, Portland 92; New Jersey 104, Miami 95; Memphis 84, Toronto 81; L.A. Lakers 121, Detroit 92; Houston 88, New York 86; Dallas 95, Denver 94; Utah 98, Phoenix 84; Milwaukee 113, Golden State 97. ***AP***

SPORTSWATCH

Ateneo cagefest begins Jan. 13

EVERYONE is invited to the grand opening of the 2002 season of the Ateneo Basketball League (ABL) on Sunday, Jan. 13 at 11:30 a.m. at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center. Fifty-three alumni teams grouped into seven divisions are participating in this year's tournament. Games will be held at the Blue Eagle Gym and the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center on weekends from Jan. 12-April 13. Major sponsors of ABL 2002 include Purefoods, Tang, Nike, MyGlobe, Gentxt, Nestea, Nestle Ice Cream, Nesvita, Toyota Motors Philippines Corp., Strepsils, Universal Robina Corp., Scheds.Com, Leslie Corp., Lumiglow, Inc.

13 cockers pace Mandaluyong derby

THIRTEEN cockers lead the charge in today's semifinal round of the "3rd International 9-Cock Derby" at Mandaluyong Coliseum beginning at 5 p.m. with 62 fights on tap. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo. The frontrunners, who scored two points each Tuesday night, are defending champions Chuck Berry of Oklahoma and his Filipino partners Ram Lopez and Tony Litonjua (Starwars Altuz I), 2001 Cavite International Derby champs Rudy Salud (Winning Time DVH Jobo) and Pol Estrellado (PE San Pablo Hammer), Ucap head Butch Macasaet (BJ Greenwood), Choy Ampil (Ariba Albay), Vice Gov. Mario Espinosa (Ariba Masbate), Raymond Velayo (Arnis Master), Henry Tan (High Chapparal), Ashley Arayata (Agilahas) and Gov. Ito Ynares (Araneta Int'l. Jan. 21-23-25). Also with two victories are three former World Slasher Cup champions: Boy de Roca (New Guagua Coliseum), Dante Carandang (Smile 1029) and Pete Rodriguez (Roadmaster).

Global 4-cocker slated at Roligon

UNITED by love and desire to preserve and promote the sport of cockfighting, more than 50 cookers from all over the world have joined hands to stage the first ever Cyberfriends Global 4-Cock Derby at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City on Jan. 26.Composed of *sabungeros* who are either based and already citizens of other countries or overseas workers, the Cyberfriends was formed through the Internet via the Philippines' first and only cookers' website: www.sabong.com.ph. "*Ito ang talagang bakbakan ng mga* imported," spokeswoman Princess Naldo of the famous Lady Pepper entry said. "Proceeds of this derby will help finance the American cookers' fight to lobby against and defeat the proposed Senate Bill 345 in the U.S. Senate which is meant to practically kill the sport of cockfighting and the trade of game-fowl breeding in America," she added. This early, a total of 42 entries, majority of whom are Fil-Am cockers from California, New York, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, New Jersey and Nevada, have already confirmed their participation.

Wednesday's child of boxing: Are his woes history?

By Percy D. Della

REUNITED: Espinosa (left) getting the "usual pointers" from his discoverer himself, Hermie Rivera. The two broke up after Espinosa lost his WBA bantamweight crown in 1991. The two were reunited when Rivera's son, Noel, took Espinosa under him last year after the former two-time world champion pleaded with him "to give me another chance to regain my honor."

DALY CITY — Luisito Espinosa – the Wednesday's child of boxing– is out to prove he has outlasted his woes in and off the ring.

Despite three hurtful losses in a row, Espinosa, 34–once the most fearsome featherweight fighter in the universe– is staging a comeback.

Not for the money, he says. Not even to rekindle past glory –for now.

He is fighting again to help a friend (who'll remain nameless at the moment) get unhooked from drugs.

The former two-division world champion (WBC featherweight and WBA bantamweight) is focused on the chance of another "great" bout in the United States. To prove to his tormented buddy there's a new and bright future waiting out there for the both of them.

These days, Espinosa trains heavily with his friend in tow– bent on turning him into a disciple of the sweet science, and to snatch the guy from the inferno of dope.

The former champion spars with Joaquin "Killer" Gallardo, the California junior welterweight champion. Gallardo was an alternate for the US Olympic boxing team to the Atlanta Games.

Emmanuel "Noel" Rivera, son of his mentor Hermie Rivera, now manages Espinosa. Noel has put his charge on a strict martial arts regimen.

The younger Rivera says Luisito, though a lot smaller than Gallardo, rocks the sparring mate with his trademark left hooks. Noel says scrawnier guys don't want to practice with Luisito because they can't take his punches.

The senior Rivera is a broadcaster popular with the Filipino masses for his insightful coverage of the storied Tour of Luzon. He is a well-known boxing commentator on television. It was Hermie who discovered Espinosa.

He turned the former barbecue sticks maker from the tough slums of Tondo into a crackerjack bantamweight champion of the world winning the WBA diadem via a devastating 1-round KO of Thai legend Kaokor Galaxy in Bangkok in October 1989.

Luisito came back later to win the World Boxing Council featherweight crown–the first Filipino ever to hold two crowns in two divisions.

Hermie and Luisito parted ways several years ago when Espinosa's wife Marie Cherie gained control over her husband's career. The rift hurt the fighter who shuttled from one manager to another.

Espinosa's career reached its nadir in Las Vegas last January when he was stopped by Mexican featherweight Augie "Kid Vegas" Sanchez. Luisito appeared to be a shell of his old self against Sanchez, who was knocked out by John Michael Johnson 31 seconds into their bout last month.

Before that, Cesar Sotto in El Paso victimized Luisito when the judges gave the nod to the Mexican despite a clear edge the Filipino gained in the hard fought bout. Hermie admits though that the loss to Guty Espadas, Jr. in Merida, Mexico was no highway robbery. It was an ill advised adventure.

While training for Merida, Luisito, then-handled by a real estate agent named Boots Aniel—was led to slaughter due to his inadequate training with amateurs.

Espadas was subsequently dethroned by Erik Morales and recently upset by unheralded William Abelyan.

Luisito himself admits that those last two losses were the result of poor training and conditioning, combined with managerial woes.

But perhaps the memory of a 1997 fight also weighed heavily on his mind. Not so much for the outcome. He won his WBC featherweight title defense by 6th-round KO of scrappy then-undefeated Argentinean Carlos Rios.

The promoter, former South Cotabato Gov. Hilario de Pedro III, has not settled at all the disputed $150,000 fight purse. Also tagged by Hermie for that fiasco are ex-Games and Amusements Board chair Dominador Cepeda who failed to implement the most basic GAB/WBC rule of guaranteeing the fighter's purse during the weigh-in (to wit, the opponent Carlos Rios was paid cash in full), ex-manager Joe Koizumi who negligently advised Espinosa as well as co-promoters Rod Nazario and Lito Mondejar.

Despite that bout's ugly memory, Luisito says he is a new man. And he is back with family.

Luisito's wife has made amends with the Riveras who treat the couple like their own children. Noel Rivera said Espinosa is like a brother to him. "He lived with us for seven years," he said. " I also want to help him because he still has that old boxing fervor."

"*Sa ngayon ako'y nagiinsayo ng puspusan* (I am training hard at the moment), " said the fighter.

"*Hindi ko palaging ginagawa iyon* (I didn't always do that). "*Pero handa ako at gusto kung lumaban uli*" (But I am ready and I want to fight again). "*Ang pagsisikap ko sa boksing ay para sa ating Bayang Pilipinas* (I dedicate my final run in boxing for our motherland.... Philippines)."

Luisito works as a weekend bartender. But again, the fighter insists that his comeback is not about money. It is about redemption. For himself and for his friend.

Contrary to the nursery rhyme, it could be that this Wednesday's child is a child of woe no more.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Cool Under Fire 2. Winning Post 3. Lovely Luigi 4. Precious Janina

Race 2—1. Michael's Way 2. Tayp Ko Yan 3. Nag-lisang Ikaw

Race 3—1. Gidget 2. Noble Principality 3. High Typhoon 4. Smart Kevin 5. Timeless Beauty

Race 4—1. Guguy's Legacy 2. Snake Dancer 3. Maximo 4. Come in Glory 5. Impeccable

Race 5—1: Silver Flyer 2. Silver Print 3. Walang Hanggan 4. Zip On 5. Kathy Rose

Race 6—1. Playing With Fire 2. Irish Star/Lucky Choice 3. Silver Lining 4. Dynasty 5. Mark's Treasure

Race 7—1. Miss Sleween 2. High and Mighty 3. Golden Quest 4. Talk to Patsy 5. Very Sharp

Race 8—1. You and Me 2. Wings of Gold 3. Sunny View 4. Roulette Queen 5. Profit Margin

Race 9—1. Real Dancer 2. Runaway Bride 3. Dressed to Impress 4. The Magician 5. Arriba King 6. Maayo Kaayo

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Tommy Baliguas shot a 78 to win Class A honor in the Philippine Junior Golf Development Association tournament at the Negros Occidental Golf Club in Bacolod City. Also today in 1994, Enrique Araneta scored a goal to power the McKinley team to a 9-8 victory over the Los Tamaraws in the Past Presidents' Cup at the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park, Makati.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SPORTS
AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Gonzales to Rangers for $24M

ARLINGTON, Texas—Juan Gonzalez agreed Tuesday night to a $24 million, two-year contract with the Texas Rangers. Gonzalez, who turned down two-year offers from the New York Mets and Baltimore, rejoins the team where he started his major league career. The deal with Texas calls for a $2 million signing bonus, $10 million this year and $12 million in 2003. The Rangers will defer $ 4 million of his salary this year and $6.5 million next season. *AP*

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - North Carolina vs Maryland at 1 p.m., Memphis vs TCU at midnight on ESPN

NBA - Orlando Magic vs Philadelphia 76ers at 10 p.m. on NBN 4

GOLF: This is the PGA Tour at 7 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Augusta Masters 2001, Final Day at 10 p.m. on Star Sports

POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 8 a.m. and 12 noon (r) on ESPN

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

POP COLA NOW COCA COLA

Chot to get ₱3.2M as Tigers coach

BY JUNE NAVARRO

MAKE way for the Coca Cola Tigers.

The Tigers formally joined the PBA yesterday after San Miguel Corporation changed the name of its fourth team in the league from Pop Cola to Coca-Cola.

Simultaneously, former Pop Cola coach Chot Reyes got a one-year deal with the Tigers almost similar to the paycheck he earned from the Pop Cola Panthers last year.

Sources said Reyes pocketed at least P270,000 in monthly wages last year at the end of a two-year pact with the Panthers.

Reyes will receive roughly P3.2 million in basic salary this year.

He said San Miguel Corporation adopted the Tigers' monicker for Coca Cola since it stands out as the beverage firm's international mascot.

SMC, owner of San Miguel Beer, Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods in the PBA, acquired Pop Cola's PBA franchise after purchasing Cosmos Bottling Corporation from the RFM Group of Companies late last year.

"I'm elated with the development. Now I can continue working with what I have started," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

In the Commissioner's Cup, Pop Cola almost made it to the Finals but Sta. Lucia Realty turned it back by overcoming a 2-1 deficit in the semifinals. The Realtors eventually captured the title.

"Right now we ought to do some house cleaning. We have to chart our plan for the rookie draft before we could act on the players whose contracts are expiring," said Reyes.

Those with expiring contracts are Poch Juinio, Johnny Abarrientos, Jojo Lastimosa, Nelson Asaytono, William Antonio, Cris Bolado, Mon Jose and Pido Jarencio.

Reyes was reportedly interested in Jeffrey Cariaso and Rene Hawkins of the Lina Group of Companies in an attempt to rebuild the core of the 1996 Alaska Grand Slam team.

"We'll see about that in the next few days," said Reyes.

A source said that Reyes had a chat with LGC president and chief operation officer Lito Alvarez on the possibility of obtaining Cariaso and Hawkins.

Should a trade materialize, Alvarez said they would ask for first-round draft rights next year.

Reyes had openly declared the Tigers would get Yancy De Ocampo in the rookie draft set on Sunday. The Tigers own the No. 2 pick.

REYES

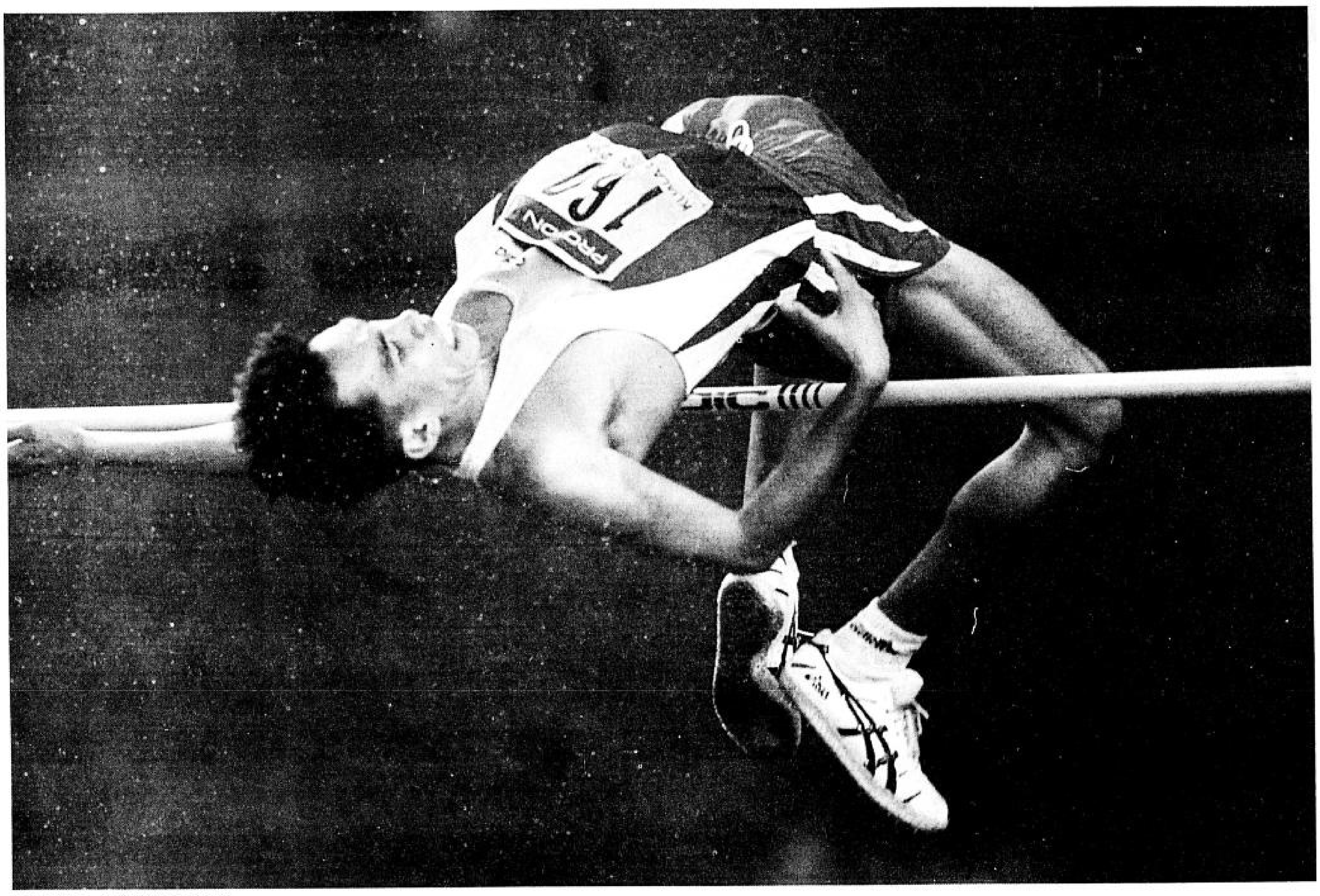

PHOTO OF THE YEAR

PDI chief photographer Ernie Sarmiento's photo of high jumper Sean Guevarra clearing the bar during the 21st SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia won first prize and Sports Photo of the Year by the Sports Press Photographers Association of the Philippines. Sarmiento also bagged the fourth prize for his photo of diver Zardo Domenos. The annual photo contest is sponsored by Agfa HDC Film and will be awarded during the Philippine Sportswriters Associations Awards Night on Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn Hotel.

Tim, Perry scout draft applicants

BY JUNE NAVARRO

THE PRESENCE of Alaska coach Tim Cone and Perry Ronquillo of Shell during the tryouts for the Asian Games in the past two days has sparked speculations that ailing national coach Ron Jacobs would be replaced.

Cone visited the three-week long tryouts Tuesday morning, while Ronquillo was at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center inside the Ateneo campus yesterday.

But both of them said they're just scouting the rookies who applied for the 2002 PBA Annual Draft on Sunday.

"I went there to witness how rookies like Mike Cortez, Renren Ritualo and Jimmy Alapag play and nothing more," said Ronquillo. "In fact, I asked coach Jong Uichico if I could watch the proceedings."

A source told the INQUIRER that Cone also cited the same reasons as the American coach yearned to have a preview of what Alaska might snare in the draft to be held at the Glorietta Center.

Shell owns the Nos. 4 and 7 picks, while Alaska will select sixth in the first-round of the rookie draft.

Team manager Joaqui Trillo said Alaska would invest on a pointguard to revert Kenneth Duremdes to his old scoring habit.

Meanwhile, Jacobs was still recovering at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the St. Luke's Medical Center.

Although the 59-year-old San Miguel consultant is fast recuperating, a source said it would be unlikely for Jacobs to handle the coaching chores for the PBA-spiked national team.

The source added PBA officials were contemplating finding a replacement in a series of exploratory talks. PBA bigwigs, however, denied such move was taken.

In another development, the PBA Commissioner's Office will screen the 81 applicants to the 2002 Draft today and will come up with the final list of those eligible Friday morning.

At presstime, less than half of the hopefuls have passed the requirements and only two of several dozen Fil-foreign players have submitted Department of Justice confirmations that would make them eligible in the lottery.

Dr. J's girl stuns Capriati; Clijsters wins

SYDNEY, Australia — Alexandra Stevenson produced a stunning upset Wednesday against top seed Jennifer Capriati, ousting the Australian and French Open champion in three sets in an all-American duel at the adidas International.

Stevenson, the 20-year-old daughter of NBA great Julius "Dr. J" Erving who reached the semifinals at Wimbledon as a qualifier in 1999, sealed a quarterfinal berth with a 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-4 win on her third match point.

She had match point on her serve at 5-3 but served a double fault to give Capriati the advantage and then put a forehand wide to squander the opportunity.

Capriati raced to 40-0 in the next game and was a point off leveling at 5-5 in the deciding set when her horror run started with a series of errors to take the game to deuce

She twice served double faults to give Stevenson match points and then lost the match when she put a backhand wide.

Capriati, who had a first-round bye, received treatment when 0-1 in the third set, leaving the court for 10 minutes for what appeared to be either hip or upper leg injuries or cramp.

Kim Clijsters, the No. 3 seed and world No. 5, was down a set and a break before she rallied to beat Italian Silvia Farina Elia 6-7 (4), 6-4, 6-1 and set up a quarterfinal against fellow Belgian Justine Henin, who erased Conchita Martinez 6-0, 6-3.

With no Australians remaining in the singles draw Clijsters, the girlfriend of Australian and world No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt, had the parochial crowd on her side. After trading breaks in the second, Clijsters made the decisive break to lead 5-4 and then served out to level.

She raced through the third set in 28 minutes but finished with 60 unforced errors, which she blamed on a swirling wind and hot conditions.

In other women's matches, No. 7 seed Sandrine Testud defeated Henriera Nagyova 6-1, 6-2 in 59 minutes to move into a quarterfinal against defending titlist Martina Hingis, while Meghann Shaughnassy had a 6-4, 6-1 win over Daniela Hantuchova.

In the first of the women's quarterfinals, No. 4 seed Serena Williams faces No. 6 seed Amelie Mauresmo later Wednesday on center court at Sydney's International Tennis Center.

Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan, who ousted men's top seed Sebastien Grosjean in the first round, lost to Max Mirnyi of Belarus. Mirnyi won 6-2, 6-3 in just over an hour to advance to a quarterfinal against Frenchman Julien Boutter, who beat German Rainer Schuettler 6-4, 7-6 (3).

In other second round matches, Nicolas Escude eliminated No. 4 seed Guilermo Canas of Argentina 6-4, 6-1, Lee Hyung-taik, the top-ranked Asian player, swept Karol Kucera 6-2, 6-1 and former world No. 1 Marcelo Rios accounted for Andrei Pavel 6-1, 6-4. *AP*

Elizalde heads list of guests

FRANK Elizalde, the International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines, heads the distinguished list of sports officials who will be gracing the annual PSA Awards Night tomorrow at the Holiday Inn hotel.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been invited as guest of honor and speaker of the affair set to start at 7 p.m.

Joining Elizalde in the main guests' roster are Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, Philippine Sports Commission chair Carlos Tuason, Rep. Monico Puentevella, chair of the House committee on youth and sports, Games and Amusements Board chief Eduardo Villanueva, and Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor, commanding general of the Philippine Air Force.

The affair, feting the top achievers of the 2001 season led by Co-Athletes of the Year awardees Efren "Bata" Reyes and Dorothy Joy Delasin, is sponsored by Photokina Marketing and Red Bull with support from the PSC and will be covered by Viva.Vintage Television.

Welcoat battles Blu in crucial PBL tiff

Standings	W	L
ICTSI-La Salle	8	4
Shark	8	4
Blu	7	5
Welcoat	7	5
Kutitap	7	6
Ateneo	4	7
Ana	4	8
Montana	3	9

GAMES TODAY:
3:30 p.m.—Montana vs Ateneo-Pioneer
5:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs Blu Detergent

WELCOAT and Blu Detergent collide today in a crucial meeting that will determine their chances of clinching automatic semifinal berths in the 2001 PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Both teams sport similar 7-5 slates and the winner of the 5:30 p.m. match gets a chance of gaining one of the two automatic slots to the semifinals.

The winner will have to hurdle its final match and hope that both defending champion Shark Energy Drink and leader ICTSI-La Salle lose one of their last two remaining outings to forge a three-way tie for the lead.

In such case, the team with the highest quotient will earn the No. 1 spot while the other two teams battle in a playoff for the other automatic semis berth.

Welcoat was upset 72-73 by Kutitap Toothpaste last Saturday night and is vent on bouncing back against Blu Detergent.

Coach Junel Baculi of Welcoat expects his five pro-bound cagers—Yancy de Ocampo, Ren Ren Ritualo, Eugene Tan, Frederick Canlas and Jojo Manalo—to deliver the goods for his team.

"It's a must for us to win our last two outings," said Baculi.

Blu Detergent is also coming off from a 73-83 defeat to ICTSI-La Salle and to keep their hopes alive for an automatic semifinal slot, Tony de la Cerna's wards must show their fiery form when they beat Welcoat, 80-75, in their first round meeting last Nov. 22.

DELASIN

Delasin arriving today for PSA Awards

BY JONG ARCANO

FIL-AMERICAN Dorothy Delasin arrives this morning from San Francisco to personally receive her second straight Athlete of the Year award from the Philippine Sportswriters Association tomorrow night at the Holiday Inn-Manila Pavilion.

But strangely, Delasin is said to be planing without her father, Sonny, who has been her constant companions in all her previous homecomings. Instead, Delasin is bringing in the caddie who helped her win two events in the LPGA last season, Clint Begay, and a new agent, Mark Freeland.

Delasin, who has already moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico where the Begays live far away from her family's south San Francisco home, won more than $600,000 (about P30 million) in the LPGA including victories in the Giant Eagle Classic and the Samsung Championship.

Delasin's small entourage is arriving on board Philippine Airlines flight 107. They will motor straight to the HIMP where they will be on a sponsored stay before kicking off a hectic week with a courtesy call to Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Tuason.

Begay is the brother of PGA standout Notah, a bosom buddy of the celebrated Tiger Woods whose career is being handled also by Freeland.

Delasin's sister Divina has long been in town since she received Dorothy's TOYM award in Malacañang early this month. But yesterday afternoon, Divina has yet to get hold of Dorothy's official itinerary. The PSC and the PSA are jointly coordinating the Delasin visit.

Highlighting Delasin's week-long visit is a round of golf with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo at Wack Wack on Saturday. They will have another meeting at the Malacañang Palace on Monday.

Dorothy, who was also awarded the top PSA award last year for crowning herself the LPGA rookie of the year, will be in town up to Friday.

Freeland told the INQUIRER that Dorothy is proud of winning the PSA plum which she shares with billiards hero Efren "Bata" Reyes.

"Dorothy is thrilled and honored to have been chosen as Athlete of the Year for the second time. She loves carrying the flag for the Philippines on the LPGA Tour and hopes that her success brings more young Filipinos to the game of golf," said Delasin.

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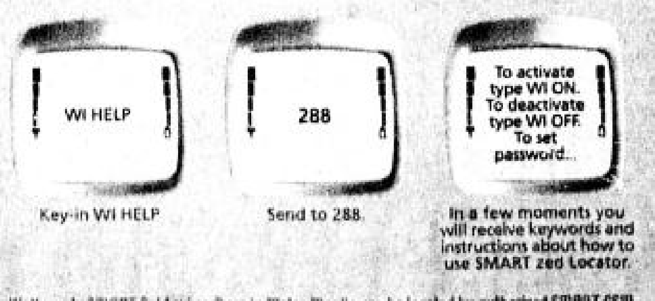
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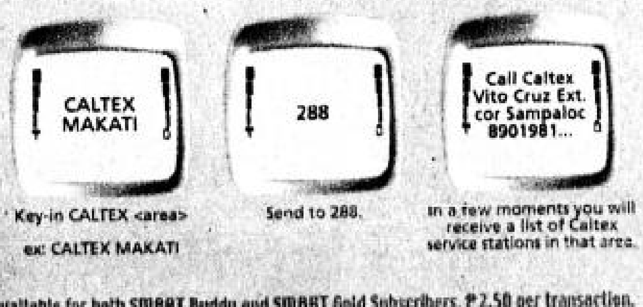
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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

For the faithful, all roads lead to Quiapo

BY JEROME ANING, ABIGAIL HO AND CHRISTINE GAYLICAN

THE IMAGE of the Black Nazarene plowed through a crowd of about 150,000 devotees who flocked to the annual procession in Quiapo, Manila yesterday afternoon.

At least 10 people were reported to have fainted while dozens more suffered abrasions and punctured feet. About a dozen children got separated from their parents while nine people, mostly elderly, were robbed.

Vehicular and pedestrian traffic were heavy on all Quiapo streets leading to the Church. The nearby Sta. Cruz, San Miguel and Sampaloc districts were also affected.

But residents in the area have to endure a dry spell when an "uncharted" Maynilad Water Services Inc. pipe went bust after it was struck by a Light Rail Transit line 2 contractor on CM Recto Avenue. The water cut off affected parts of Quiapo, Sta. Cruz, Binondo, Sampaloc and Divisoria in Manila.

Devotees, some coming from as far as Northern Luzon, Bicol and the Visayas, trekked to the Basilica of the Nazarene and followed the wooden icon of the cross-bearing Christ as it was paraded on the streets of Quiapo.

The people waved white kerchiefs, raised lit candles and shouted "Viva El Señor Nazareno," as the icon was taken out of the church about 1:45 p.m.

They also jostled for a chance to have their kerchiefs wiped on the statue, which is believed to be miraculous and heal any ailment and provide luck.

Many devotees, barefoot and clad in the traditional purple shirt, said they brought prayers and petitions for a better life amid the economic crisis plaguing the country.

Others had specific wishes, such as the recovery of an ailing family member or passing an examination.

Still others said they were merely fulfilling religious vows, or *panata*, they made years ago, and that was to attend the annual procession and be part of the all-men group that pulled the caroza which carried the life-size icon.

Segundo Mariano, 42, a businessman, said he started going to Quiapo 10 years ago, when his wife, suffering from ovarian cancer, underwent a successful operation.' His wife's recovery, he said, was the Black Nazarene's answer to his prayers.

Mayor Lito Atienza and his son-in-law Councilor Miles Roces are this year's

FOR THE FAITHFUL/ A18

NBI drops taxi driver as Nida slay witness

BY JEROME ANING

ONE angle is dropped, another develops.

This seems to be fast becoming a familiar scene at the National Bureau of Investigation, which has been probing the slaying of movie actress Nida Blanca for the past two months.

Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI spokesperson on the Blanca case, said the agency will be dropping from its list of witnesses a taxi driver who claimed to have remembered transporting three women to the actress' house in White Plains, Quezon City, on the morning of Nov. 7.

NBI/ A18

Cops stumped over slug that killed Strawberry

BY TJ BURGONIO

AN OFFICIAL of the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday said the caliber of the gun used to kill the former child actress Strawberry (Anouk Baldo in real life) could not be determined because the slug recovered from the victim's head was so badly fragmented.

"They (ballisticians) are unsure about the caliber of the gun from where the fragmented slug came from, considering that it's just a fragment," said lawyer Jun de Guzman, head of the NBI Special Action Unit.

De Guzman attended a conference on the case at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Also present in the meeting, presided by Director Nestorio Gualberto of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, were Baldo's father, Oscar, Quezon City Rep. Maite Defensor, Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez of the Southern Police District, and Supt. Armando Pineda of the Las Piñas police.

Investigators from the Las Piñas Police vowed to submit fragments of the slug recovered from the scene of the crime so these could be matched with the deformed slug.

The young Baldo was shot on the morning of Dec. 18 following a traffic altercation between her boyfriend, Mark John Doromal, and the sons of businessman Raynaldo Picar, inside the BF Executive Village in Las Piñas.

The former actress died two days after the shooting.

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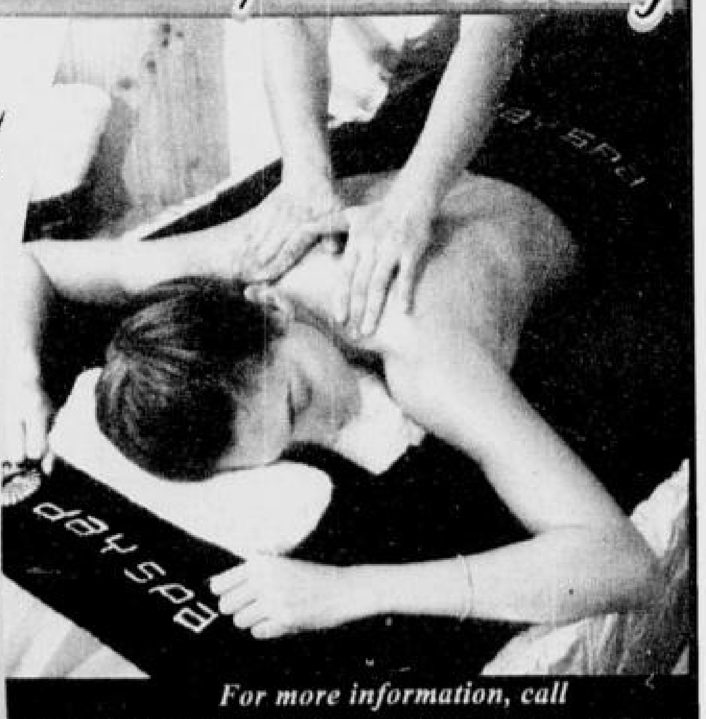

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Maggi Spaghetti 90g	P36 /4's	
MoonDish Laing 155g (All Flavors)	P20 Ea	
Señorita Dry Peas 155g	P26 /5's	
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The coup threat is real

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE threat of a coup is real, very real!

In fact, if the government doesn't nip it in the bud, the plan to stage "People Power 4" will take place starting on Jan. 21, the first anniversary of the ouster of President Erap. It will culminate on Feb. 25, the 15th anniversary of Edsa 1.

Intelligence documents in this writer's possession say prominent personalities and organizations are involved in a planned destabilization plot that would be backed by some members of the military and police.

***

Those leaders and representatives of several groups have been secretly meeting since Dec. 20 to map out plans for the big event.

***

El Shaddai and Manalo's INC will provide the "warm bodies" for the month-long event. El Shaddai has an estimated two million members, and the INC, three million.

My DPA (deep penetration agent) in those meetings told me a high-ranking member of the so-called "civil society" received P20 million for the attendance of "her people" at the Philippine Consultative Assembly (PCA). PCA has been described by its critics as an "organization of two members," namely, Montayre and former Budget Secretary Salvador Enriquez.

They have not left out any stone unturned, according to my DPA, as funds have been set aside for members of foreign media who will cover the destabilization efforts.

***

In the Dec. 20 meeting, a police general said that as of that date, a senator had recruited from 500 to 1,000 members of the Philippine National Police to take part in the destabilization move.

Also discussed in that meeting was the possibility of using hardened criminals and members of the Abu Sayyaf and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) to create trouble "but to minimize casualties." It was not known if the plan was adopted.

***

Chills ran down my spine when I read that part in the intelligence report that dealt with self-styled Young Officers Union (YOU) spokesperson Alexander Baron Cervantes. It seemed Cervantes had been accused of leaking the minutes of the secret meetings to Pastor "Boy" Saycon of the Council of Philippine Affairs, a group supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Cervantes, according to the intelligence papers, had become a gadfly to the group because he questioned the grant of P2 million to former Land Transportation Office chief Edgardo Abenina and police Supt. Rafael Cardeno for their part in the destabilization efforts.

You will read more of the minutes of those meetings in subsequent columns.

***

Saturnino Medina, a retired police general, is acting like a warlord and sowing terror at the Leyte Industrial Development Estate (LIDE) in Isabel, Leyte.

Medina, according to reports, beat up a shipping agent last Oct. 14 at the wharf of the Philippine Phosphate Fertilizer Authority, at the LIDE zone. The reports also said that the retired general also threatened and disarmed security guards of the LIDE Management Corp., the company managing LIDE.

Medina is manager of the Jayhawk Security Agency which has been hired by Philphos. His guards, the reports said, wear uniforms that make them look like members of the Army Special Forces, a practice which is unauthorized. They allegedly also carry M-16 rifles and K-1 assault rifles. "Blue" guards are not allowed to carry those high-powered weapons.

The local police, the reports say, have not taken action against Medina and his guards' carrying of unauthorized weapons.

Philippine National Police chief Leandro Mendoza should take a direct hand in investigating Medina.

***

Zamboanga Port Customs Collector Lourdes Mangaoang is insisting on filing a smuggling case against prominent businessman Lepeng Wee. This, even after the same case has been dismissed by the Department of Justice.

But Supreme Court records will show that the "crusading" customs collector, a lawyer, herself is not without sin.

A case for disbarment against Mangaoang is pending with the high court.

The case stemmed from alleged substitution by Mangaoang of smuggled gun parts in a box seized at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) sometime in 1996. At that time, Mangaoang was Naia customs' legal officer.

Witnesses said Mangaoang made it appear that there was no such seizure when she had the gun parts removed from the box. When the box was taken to the Department of Justice to be presented as evidence, there were no gun parts. What was found inside were personal effects. Thus, the smuggling case was dropped.

Witnesses said that the suspect, Christopher Gomez, was Mangaoang's close friend and her former professor at the University of the Philippines.

South Metro residents to TRB: 'We want our money back'

By Christian V. Esguerra

RESIDENTS of around 100 subdivisions in Southern Manila and nearby provinces yesterday demanded a refund of the money they paid to toll authorities, after government suspended the controversial increase in tolls at the South Luzon Expressway and Skyway.

Rey Junia of the Movement for Responsible Enterprise said the Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. should refund what motorists had additionally paid for using the road systems.

"There has to be a refund," Junia said. "Of course, the process might be complicated but we have only the TRB (Toll Regulatory Board) to blame for hastily implementing an increase."

Citra jacked up toll rates at the South Luzon Expressway and Skyway system by 36 to 60 percent beginning Jan. 1.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday suspended the increase beginning today, following numerous protests from residents and lawmakers.

But even with the suspension—which will allow a more comprehensive study of the increase—Junia said residents will push for rebates to make up for the additional amount they had paid.

Homeowner associations, mainly from Parañaque and San Pedro, Sta. Rosa, and Biñan in Laguna, are now preparing a petition for refund, Junia said.

"We're doing this to point out that the increase was wrong in the first place," he said. "The increase should not have been granted since the company was not true to its commitment to the public."

Junia slammed Citra for supposedly reneging on its responsibility to improve the expressway system, while petitioning for an increase in toll rates.

"We're not receiving any value for our money," he said "We're supposed to use the expressway for convenience. But look at the traffic there."

The President has asked her Cabinet to study the controversial issue.

Grandfather drops, kills month-old boy

A MONTH-OLD baby boy died Tuesday night when his grandfather accidentally dropped him inside their residence on Victory Street, Joan of Arc, Barangay Gulod, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Lester Ablao was already dead when his parents discovered him lying on a wooden bed inside their residence.

But Herman Nasman, 42, stepfather of the infant's father, Lloyd Espiritu, maintained he did not drop the boy. Nasman said he merely left the boy with his feeding bottle on the bed.

He added the baby had been sick for days. *Andrea Trinidad-Echavez*

Traders warn of high costs once Makati hikes taxes

By Alcuin Papa

MAKATI businessmen warned of high prices of consumer goods in the city if the local government pushes through with its plan to raise business taxes in the city.

Chit Jose, president of the Makati City Chamber of Commerce, said that an increase in business taxes will have a "domino effect," because they will have to pass on the tax burden to consumers by raising the prices of consumer goods.

"(An increase in business taxes) will definitely raise the costs of goods in the city," Jose said. "We are against it and it should be deferred."

She also said that the economic downturn in the country is already taking its toll on businesses.

Jose also complained they were not sufficiently informed in time for the first round of public hearings on the issue.

"It was held in December and that was a busy time for us," she said. "The lead time was too small."

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay has already deferred the proposed increases pending the holding of more public hearings.

"It will be good for the public hearings to continue so we can have a forum where we can voice our opinions," Jose said.

Jaime Matias, general manager of the Makati Commercial Estates Association, told the Inquirer that most of their members felt it was right for the city government to impose a "moratorium" on any and all increases of taxes.

For the faithful . . .

(From page A17)

hermanos mayores, or principal sponsors. The mayor and barangay officials doled out free water for devotees because of the water cutoff.

A report said LRT-2 subcontractor JV Angeles struck an MWSI pipe "that was not on the map."

LRT-2 project manager Enrico Garcia said they saw the pipe, but was advised by a Maynilad representative to go ahead with the digging, as the pipe did not show up in Maynilad's maps.

Light Rail Transit Authority chief Teodoro Cruz Jr. also said they do not proceed with any sensitive diggings unless a Maynilad personnel was present at the site.

"This is the first time something as big as this happened," Cruz said. "There have been incidents of LRT contractors hitting water pipes, but not one that caused a water interruption (this massive)."

Garcia added they had become "very cautious" in their diggings.

Water supply to the affected areas is expected to resume tonight, said Jess Matubis, Maynilad's corporate relations manager.

"Maynilad's construction team has been doing round the clock repairs and they should be finished by Thursday evening," Matubis said.

This marked the third time LRT contractors, led by Hanjin Inc., damaged Maynilad's water arteries. First was in year 2000 when it cracked pipelines across Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard in Sta. Mesa, Manila. The second incident occurred on the Claro M. Recto site last year.

The president of the comite de festejos (committee on festivities), Desiderio Salvador, estimated the crowd in the church's vicinity at about 150,000.

The Western Police District Station 3, however, placed the number at about 100,000. A policeman said he thinks more people came to the procession because the weather was better.

Salvador also recalled that last year many people were afraid to go to the procession after a series of bomb blasts struck the metropolis on Dec. 30.

THERE is no room for the guileful and the sinful here, where the Black Nazarene plows through a sea of devotees.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 10, 2002
Week After Epiphany

1st Reading: 1 Jn 4:19—5:4
Gospel: Lk 4:14-22

Jesus acted with the power of the Spirit, and on his return to Galilee the news about him spread throughout all that territory. He began teaching in the synagogues of the Jews and everyone praised him.

When Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the sabbath as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's year of mercy."

Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, "Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen."

All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while he kept on speaking of the grace of God. Nevertheless they asked, "Who is this but Joseph's son?"

Commentary

The first reading reminds us to keep our discipleship practical—there is no love of God without love of our brother or sister. There is no love of our brother or sister if we are unmoved by their suffering or if we wish them well but take no action. The gospel gives the first words spoken by Jesus in his public ministry as presented in St. Luke's gospel. They are very important words for knowing him, for he found his mission statement here in these words of Isaiah. These words spoke to him: "This is what my Father has sent me to do. These words find their fulfillment in me." Jesus invites us to share his mission statement. Let's pray for light to see how we can put it into action.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY)—Robbery with homicide—Robbery with homicide is a special complex crime against property. Homicide is incidental to the robbery which is the main purpose of the criminal. In charging robbery with homicide, the *onus probandi* is to establish: (a) the taking of personal property with the use of violence or intimidation against a person; (b) the property belongs to another; (c) the taking is characterized with *animus lucrandi*; and (d) on the occasion of the robbery or by reason thereof, the crime of homicide, which is used in the generic sense, was committed. The phrase "by reason" covers homicide committed before or after the taking of personal property of another, as long as the motive of the offender in killing a person before the robbery is to deprive the victim of his personal property which is sought to be accomplished by eliminating an obstacle or opposition or in killing a person after the robbery to do away with a witness or to defend the possession of the stolen property. Thus, it matters not that the victim was killed prior to the taking of the personal properties of the victim. What is essential in robbery with homicide is that there be a direct relation and intimate connection between robbery and killing, whether both crimes be committed at the same time. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, People v. Torres, G.R. No. 130661, June 27, 2001]

Digest by R.B. Vera

NBI . . .

(From page A17)

Diaz told reporters that Ruel de Lumen not only failed to provide investigators an exact description of the three women, but could not even pinpoint the house where he dropped off his passengers.

He said the address where De Lumen said he dropped the trio turned out to be the home of Philippine Sports Commission chief Butch Tuason.

"With these developments, there is nothing we could do but drop him from the list of our potential witness," Diaz said.

But Diaz said they are now investigating the flurry of mysterious cellular phone calls between two persons connected to the actress on the day of the murder.

The calls, he said, were made between 9 p.m. of Nov. 6 and 4 a.m. of Nov. 7. The actress' cell phone, he said, was with her aide, Elena dela Paz.

"We checked the billing statement for Blanca's cell phone-those received and those made on the unit," he said.

"We saw several calls were made from Blanca's cell phone, and most of them were made to members of the household," he added.

But the spokesperson said they checked the billing statements of those who called up Blanca and discovered that two of them called each other many times at the time of the actress' disappearance.

Diaz said the two callers did not call up Blanca but exchanged calls among themselves at an "unusually frequent rate." He did not identify the callers, except to say they are "prominent." They are not members of Blanca's household and they are not show biz personalities.

The two callers, however, have not yet been investigated.

He added the cell phone lead "will be meaningless until it is developed by investigators."

"It's just a lead, but it's better than nothing," he told reporters.

Diaz also said they cannot legally prevent Rod Strunk, husband of the murdered actress, from leaving for the United States to visit his sick mother.

"We cannot violate his constitutional right to travel, but theoretically, we can have him extradited once he is charged," he added.

METROBRIEFS

12 fall in CPD roundup

QUEZON City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and Central Police District Director Rodolfo Tor on Tuesday presented 12 robbery suspects who were arrested in three separate police operations. "We want the public to know that the police are working," the mayor said. Eugene Dumlao, 25, of San Mateo, Rizal; and Ryan Gemora, 20, and Michael Banaga, 22, both of Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City, were nabbed after two months of surveillance. They were collared about 9 p.m. Sunday while waiting for victims on Elliptical Road. A few hours later, five suspected robbers said to be behind at least fifteen robberies on Commonwealth Avenue were arrested. Police identified them as Rodolfo Tuazon, 35; Mike Lampa, 26; Antonio Baluti, 28; Ronaldo Prospero, 28; and Darwin Sala, 24. The suspects yielded five assorted firearms and two Toyota Tamaraw FX vehicles. Four more suspects who allegedly robbed two Korean nationals were also nabbed by the CPD. They were Allan Cerda, 26; Jayson Catanyag, 26; Edwin Samson, 27; and Allan Dizon, 24. Their victims Jang Seok Wong, 25, a student at the Global Foundation School, and her boardmate, Sagong Sujeong, identified the suspects in a police lineup. *Agnes Donato*

Another tourist robbed in Ermita

ANOTHER Japanese tourist fell prey to robbers in Ermita, Manila Sunday night. Sakurai Shigeyuki, 48, temporarily residing on Gonzales Street in Ermita, was robbed by four "Filipino" men, Western Police District General Assignment Section records showed. The victim lost his Seiko watch, a Minolta camera, and P3,000 in cash. But investigators are still trying to get a clear picture of what happened to Shigeyuki on Sunday about 10:30 p.m. along M. Adriatico Street, near Padre Faura in Ermita. WPD-GAS records showed that the victim reported the complaint as "loss of personal property," and not as theft or robbery. Investigators are wondering why he reported it as loss of personal property when the Japanese identified four suspects.

It's quality not quantity, says QC dad

IT IS "quality, and not quantity," that matters when Quezon City aldermen sit and legislate measures for the city, according to Councilor Ariel Inton of the city's 4th district. He was reacting to criticisms that the city council is allegedly too "slow" in enacting measures, as compared to its predecessors. He said well thought-out ordinances and resolutions are better than "run-of-the-mill legislation." Inton came to the defense of the city council after it was reported that only eight percent, or 24 out of 299 proposed ordinances, and 19 percent, or only 63 of the 328 proposed resolutions, were approved by the 15th Council last year. The report blamed the Council's Committee on Laws, Rules and Internal Government, chaired by Quezon City Majority Floor Leader Jesus Manuel Suntay, for the "snail-paced legislative work" of the council. "My colleagues and I in the Quezon City Council are more careful and circumspect in our task of proposing and approving local measures," Inton said. "We want to avoid rushing the approval of any measure to ensure that only those that favorably impact the rights and interests of the majority of Quezon City residents are passed."

Naia wages all-out war on crime

THE MANAGEMENT of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) will go all-out in its campaign against crime and illegal activities at the airport in 2002. Naia general manager Edgardo Manda said any employee who will be caught committing unlawful acts will be slapped with criminal and administrative charges. The airport manager stressed that dismissal will be among the very first options should evidence warrant. "I appeal to the public for their cooperation," Manda said. "Information on unlawful activities in the Naia can be relayed to any airport official, even to me directly at my office." Manda added that the Naia management will see to it that the airport will be rid of all undesirables. "If there's anybody who want to try our resolve, he will be solid proof that we mean business," he said.

In admitting guilt, Valerio wife's lover says 'I was only following orders'

By Andrea Trinidad-Echavez

THE TRIAL for the murder of Government Corporate Counsel Justice Jun Valerio took an unexpected twist on Tuesday when one of the prime suspects pleaded guilty before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

SPO1 Antonio E. Cabador Jr., alias Jimmy Lagro, a former member of the Western Police District and alleged lover of Valerio's wife, Milagros, admitted in court his participation in the killing of Justice Valerio.

Cabador, along with Martin Jimenez, Geronimo Quintana and Samuel Baran, are facing murder charges before the sala of QC RTC Judge Ma. Theresa Yadao in connection with Valerio's killing.

Valerio's wife, Milagros, was charged with parricide.

Cabador's guilty plea came as a surprise, and the court had to ask the suspect if he understood what he had done.

"Nobody expected it (Cabador's plea), and so he was asked again," said lawyer Sharon Abila, branch clerk of court. "He said he was indeed there when Justice Valerio was killed, but without specifying his participation.

Abila said the court even reminded Cabador of the consequences of his action, but the suspect stood his ground.

Despite the suspect's admission, Abila explained, the case will still be heard.

Valerio was shot several times in front of his residence in Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City on March 19, 2000.

National Bureau of Investigation agents linked the killing to the alleged illicit affair Milagros was having with Cabador.

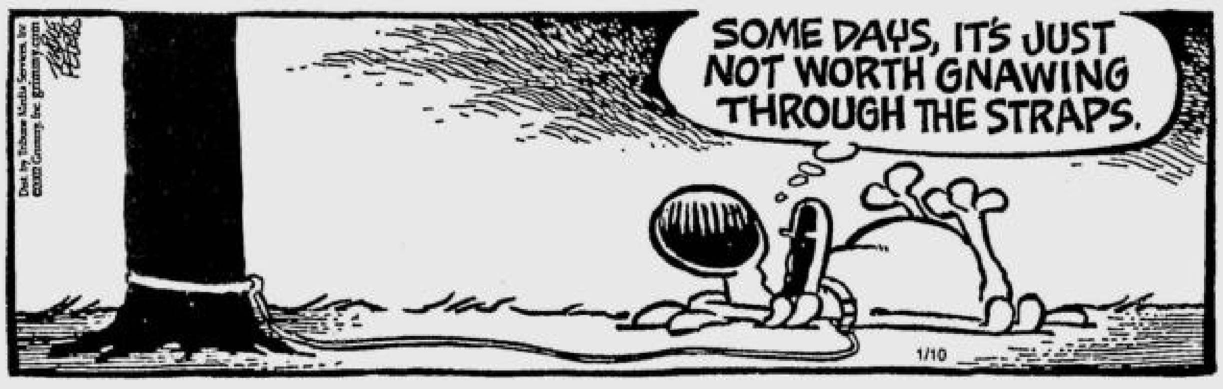
Cabador, represented by lawyer Michael Ambengan of the Public Attorney's Office, and his co-accused were charged in June last year, but only his four co-accused were arraigned when the former lawman went into hiding.

Milagros and the three men pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Cabador was arrested in Tagum City in November, following an NBI manhunt, which lasted for months.

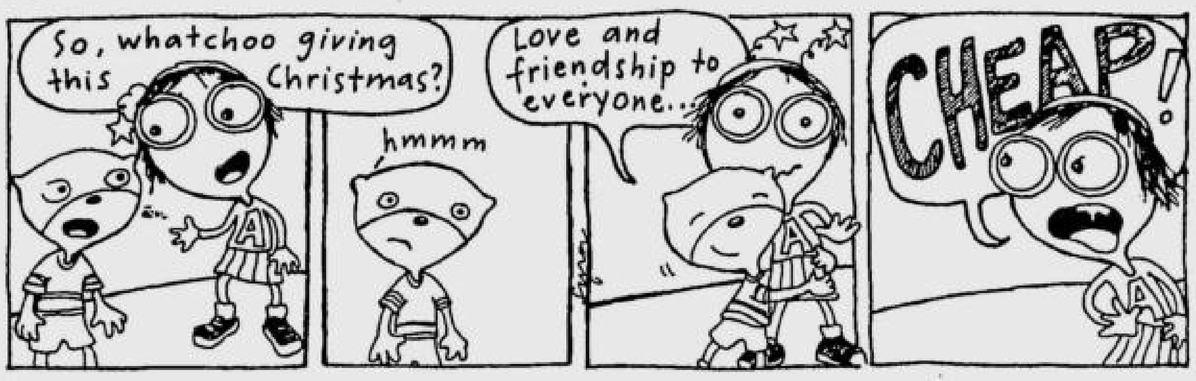
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SOME DAYS, IT'S JUST NOT WORTH GNAWING THROUGH THE STRAPS.
1/10

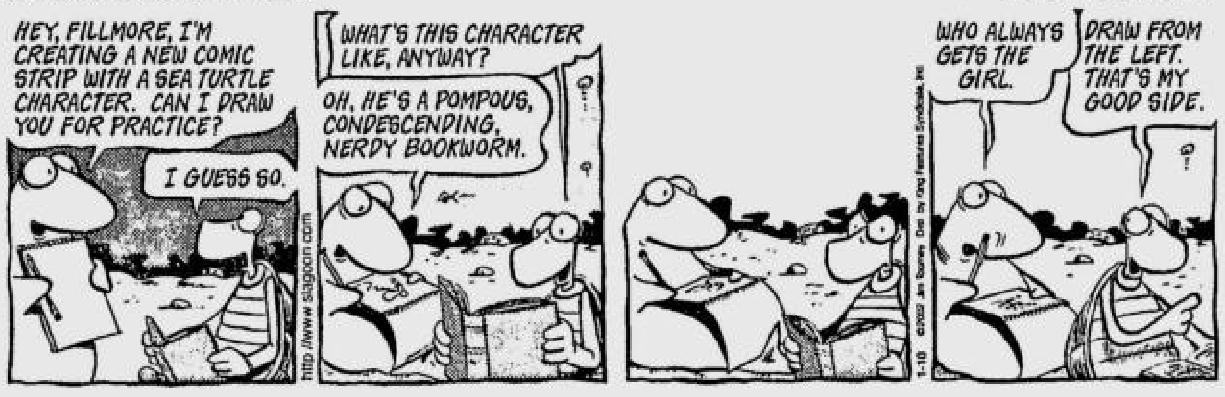
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So, whatchoo giving this Christmas?
hmmm
Love and friendship to everyone...
CHEAP!

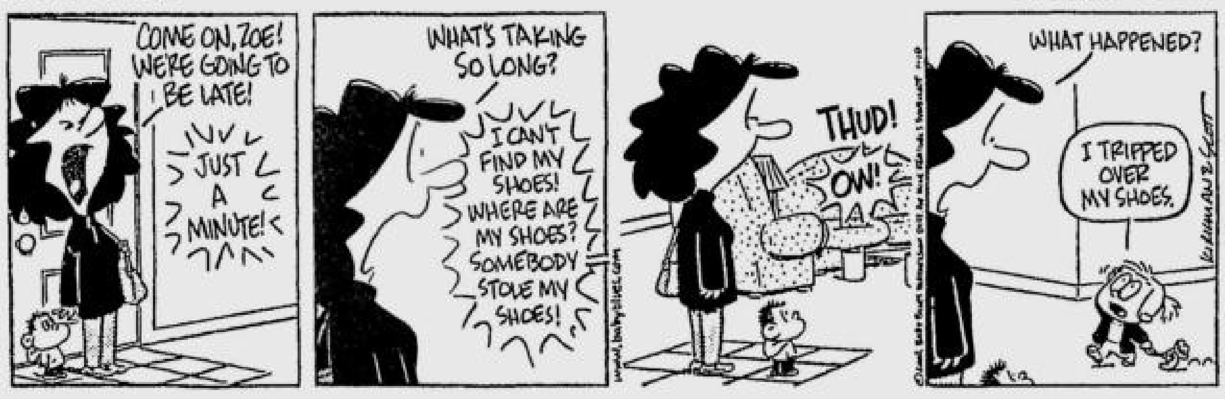
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HEY, FILLMORE, I'M CREATING A NEW COMIC STRIP WITH A SEA TURTLE CHARACTER. CAN I DRAW YOU FOR PRACTICE?
I GUESS SO.
WHAT'S THIS CHARACTER LIKE, ANYWAY?
OH, HE'S A POMPOUS, CONDESCENDING, NERDY BOOKWORM.
WHO ALWAYS GETS THE GIRL.
DRAW FROM THE LEFT. THAT'S MY GOOD SIDE.
http://www.slagoon.com
1-10

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


COME ON, ZOE! WE'RE GOING TO BE LATE!
JUST A MINUTE!
WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?
I CAN'T FIND MY SHOES! WHERE ARE MY SHOES? SOMEBODY STOLE MY SHOES!
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OW!
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I TRIPPED OVER MY SHOES.
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HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, George Foreman, Frank Sinatra Jr.

Happy Birthday: You will be able to reach your goals if you use your ingenuity. The year ahead offers all sorts of interesting propositions but if you allow your emotions to get involved you will probably make mistakes that will cost you dearly. Your numbers are 5, 18, 21, 24, 33, 37

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll be off to the races today. Plan your day and fill it full of new and exciting experiences that will lead to bigger and better things.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Problems with investments may limit your spending. It is best to ride the tide and wait until things level out. If you are patient you will recover your losses.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): This could be a make-or-break day for you. If you are having some disagreements with a partner it is best to back off until a better time.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will be able to make career moves should you desire. Your ability to get along with your colleagues will put you in a good position for promotion.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You can have a great time today as long as you make your plans early. You will be in an entertaining mood and will easily attract the attention of people you are attracted to.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Expect to experience difficulties at home. Get out with friends and do things you enjoy to offset the tension that you may be feeling from personal responsibilities.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Once you get started no one will be able to get you to stop. You have prepared yourself well, so stand up and be heard. You can make a difference if you put your mind to it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Put your efforts into hard work and you will reap the rewards. Your knowledge and excellent memory will help you achieve what you set out to do.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may be a little emotional today and that could cause problems with partners. If you are willing to meet your partner halfway you can resolve any issues that you face.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't trust everyone you work with. Someone may be trying to take advantage of you. Be blunt about whatever situation you face.

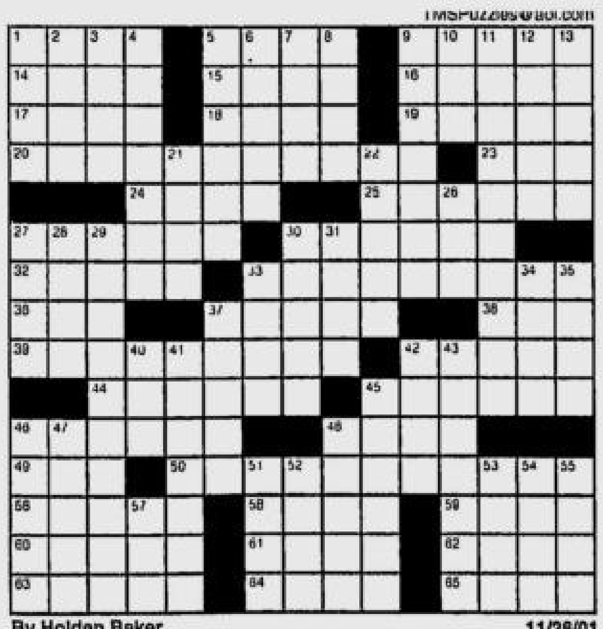
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You can contribute a lot to a group you believe in. Your ability to come up with solutions will be valued and could put you in a position of leadership.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You may be questioning your personal life right now. Be careful not to make rash decisions. Depression is likely if you are unhappy with yourself.

Birthday Baby: You are creative, sensitive and into everything. You will never hold back if there is something you want. You are a driving force that will never accept defeat and who will always come back for more.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Holden Baker
Greenfield, MA
11/28/01

ACROSS

1 Palm fruit
5 Radar spot
9 Three-tone chord
14 Bard grad, e.g.
15 Top-notch
16 Cringe
17 Turner of "Madame X"
18 Splinter group
19 Turn out
20 Briefly
23 Simpson judge
24 Grows older
25 Counterbalance
27 Singers Bessie and Kate
30 GI's ID
32 Baseball teams
33 Hook-and-ladder garage
36 Ms. Thurman
37 Mother's sisters
38 O.T. book
39 Nice police officers?
42 Does some housework
44 Alpine singer
45 Too, too charming
46 Place for an ace?
48 Eighteen-wheeler
49 Bk. after Exod.
50 Truman Capote best-seller
56 Concepts
58 Domain
59 Monty Python's Eric
60 Housing unit
61 Prognosticator
62 Ardor
63 Go in
64 Beer ingredient
65 Osprey's kin

DOWN

1 Spanish painter of limp watches
2 Alda or Ladd
3 Salad fish?
4 Spring (from)
5 Stitches loosely
6 Fertile loam
7 Partial foot
8 Singer Seeger
9 __ Night (January 5)
10 __ Tin Tin
11 Concealing one's real appearance
12 Perceptive
13 Bus terminal
21 Exclamations of disgust
22 First balconies
26 __ Schwarz (toy store)
27 Tight
28 Act out
29 Regardless of what happens
30 Place for eats
31 Table scraps
33 Harmful vapor
34 Fast jets: abbr.
35 A piece of cake
37 "Stormy Weather" composer
40 Buck's mate
41 Consultant
42 Left without words
43 Put into service
45 Guterson novel, "Snow Falling on __"
46 Bread portion
47 Enticed
48 Catch some Z's
51 Johnny or Rosanne
52 Nabisco cookie
53 Baltic Sea feeder
54 "The Good Earth" heroine
55 Proofreader's mark
57 Drink with lemon and sugar

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	A	T	S	A	J	A	K	■	C	H	I	R	P	S
A	R	R	O	G	A	T	E	■	R	E	T	O	R	T
L	E	A	D	E	N	L	Y	■	E	A	S	T	E	R
I	N	C	A	S	■	A	L	T	A	R	■	A	V	A
N	A	Y	S	■	S	N	E	A	K	S	■	T	A	P
■	■	■	■	P	A	T	S	Y	S	■	G	A	I	L
G	U	A	R	A	N	I	S	■	■	B	I	B	L	E
E	N	G	A	G	E	S	■	T	R	I	F	L	E	S
T	B	O	N	E	■	■	S	H	U	N	T	E	R	S
S	A	N	D	■	A	T	H	E	N	S	■	■	■	■
A	L	I	■	C	L	E	A	R	S	■	R	A	H	S
H	A	S	■	U	L	T	R	A	■	P	E	R	I	L
E	N	T	I	R	E	■	E	V	E	R	M	O	R	E
A	C	I	D	L	Y	■	R	E	L	E	A	S	E	D
D	E	C	O	Y	S	■	S	N	I	P	P	E	R	S

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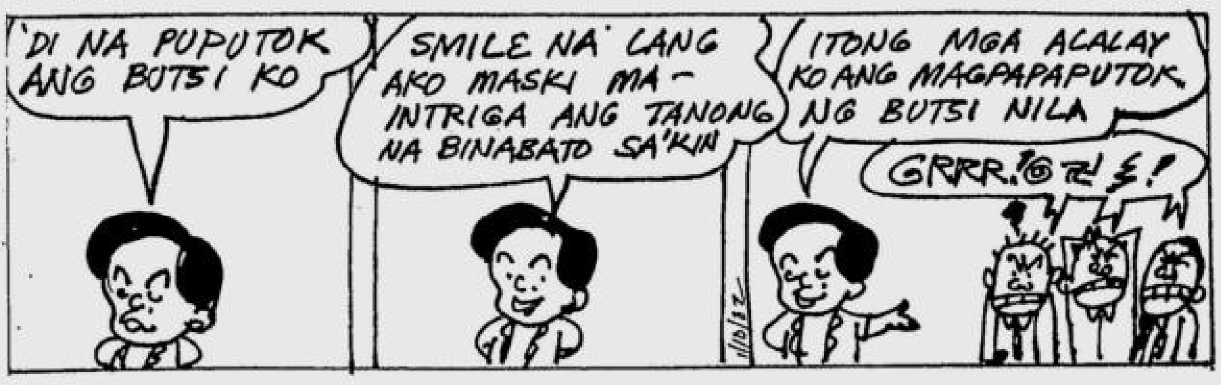
11/28/01

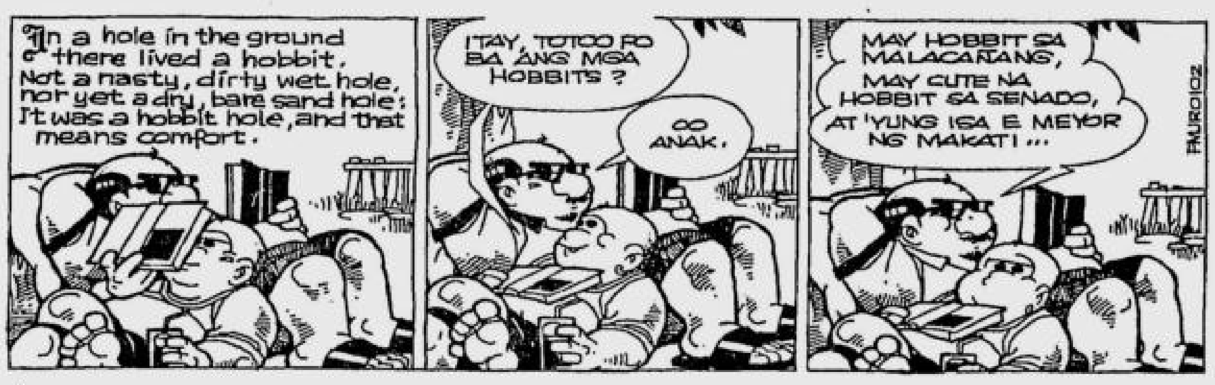
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


'DI NA PUPUTOK ANG BUTSI KO
SMILE NA LANG AKO MASKI MA-INTRIGA ANG TANONG NA BINABATO SA'KIN
ITONG MGA ALALAY KO ANG MAGPAPAPUTOK NG BUTSI NILA
GRRR.!

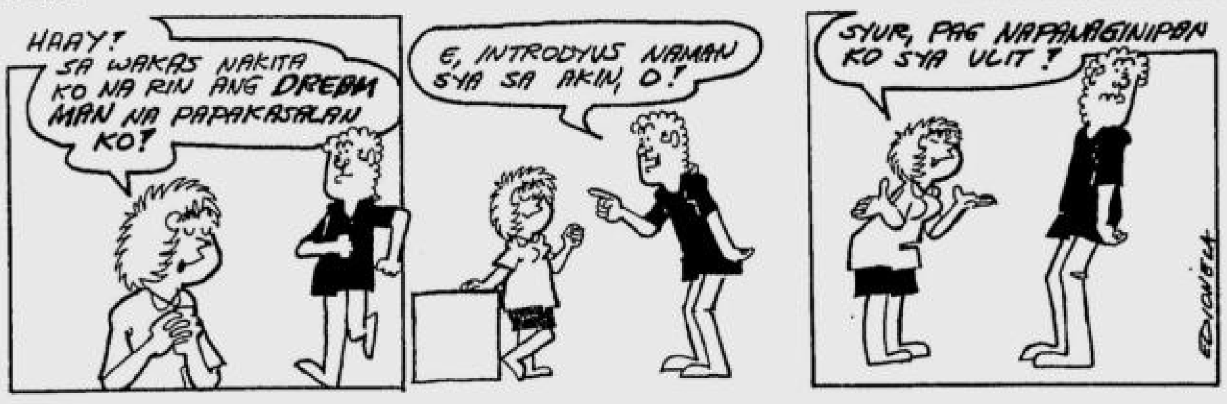
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty wet hole, nor yet a dry, bare sand hole: It was a hobbit hole, and that means comfort.
ITAY, TOTOO PO BA ANG MGA HOBBITS ?
OO ANAK.
MAY HOBBIT SA MALACAÑANG, MAY CUTE NA HOBBIT SA SENADO, AT 'YUNG ISA E MEYOR NG MAKATI ...
PMURO102

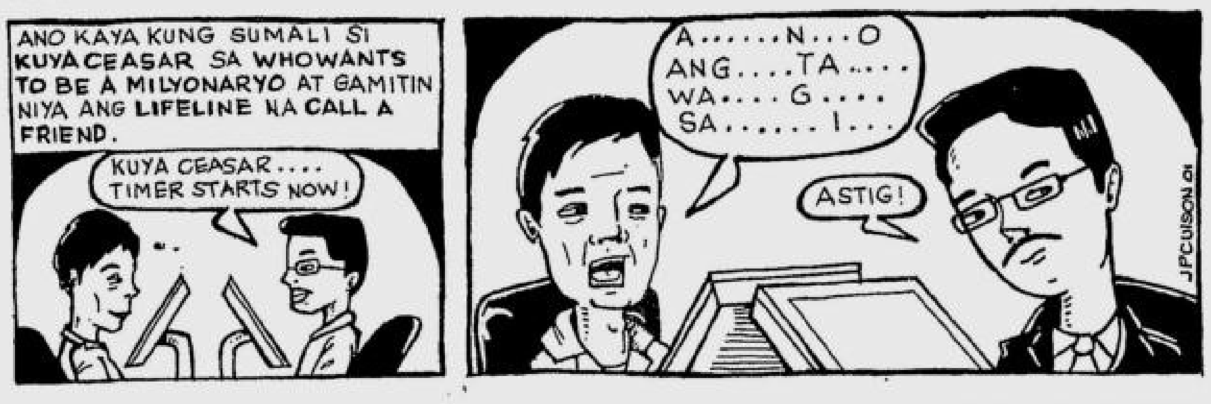
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


HAAY! SA WAKAS NAKITA KO NA RIN ANG DREAM MAN NA PAPAKASALAN KO!
E, INTRODYUS NAMAN SYA SA AKIN, O!
SYUR, PAG NAPANAGINIPAN KO SYA ULIT!
EDIONELA

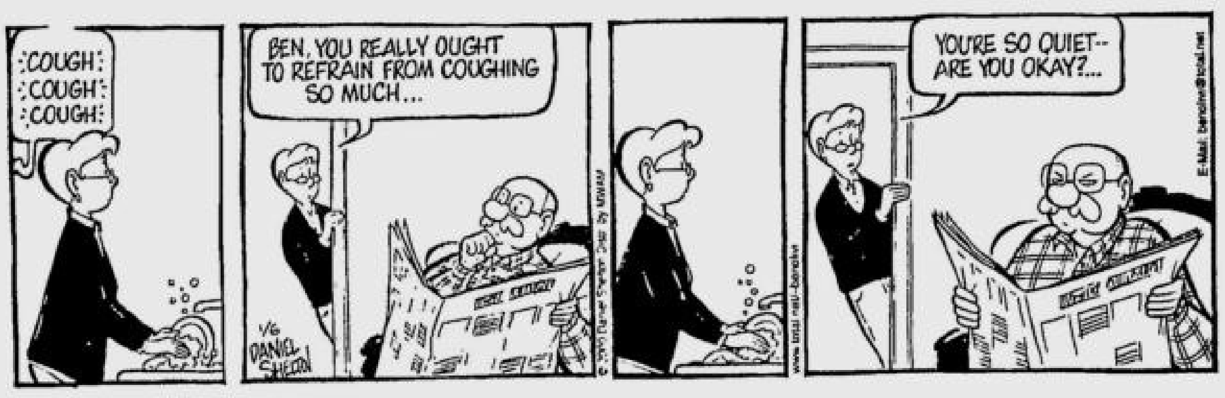
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


ANO KAYA KUNG SUMALI SI KUYA CEASAR SA WHOWANTS TO BE A MILYONARYO AT GAMITIN NIYA ANG LIFELINE NA CALL A FRIEND.
KUYA CEASAR.... TIMER STARTS NOW!
A......N...O ANG....TA.... WA....G.... SA.......I...
ASTIG!
JPCUISON 01

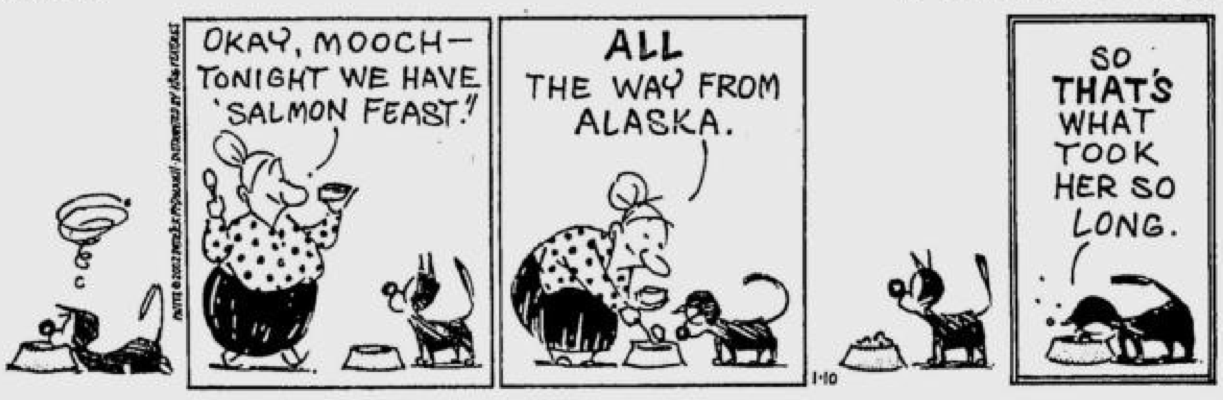
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


COUGH COUGH COUGH
BEN, YOU REALLY OUGHT TO REFRAIN FROM COUGHING SO MUCH...
YOU'RE SO QUIET-- ARE YOU OKAY?...
1/6 DANIEL SHELTON

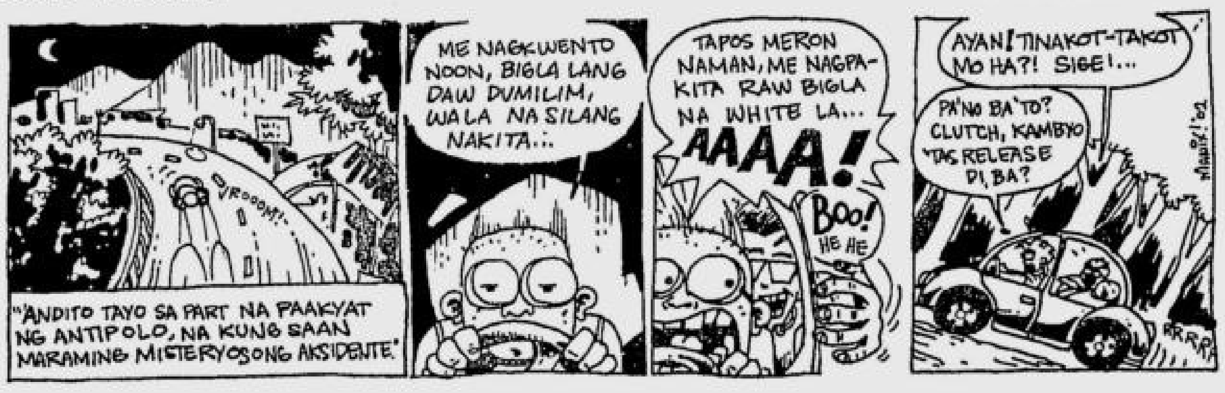
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OKAY, MOOCH— TONIGHT WE HAVE 'SALMON FEAST.'
ALL THE WAY FROM ALASKA.
SO THAT'S WHAT TOOK HER SO LONG.
1-10

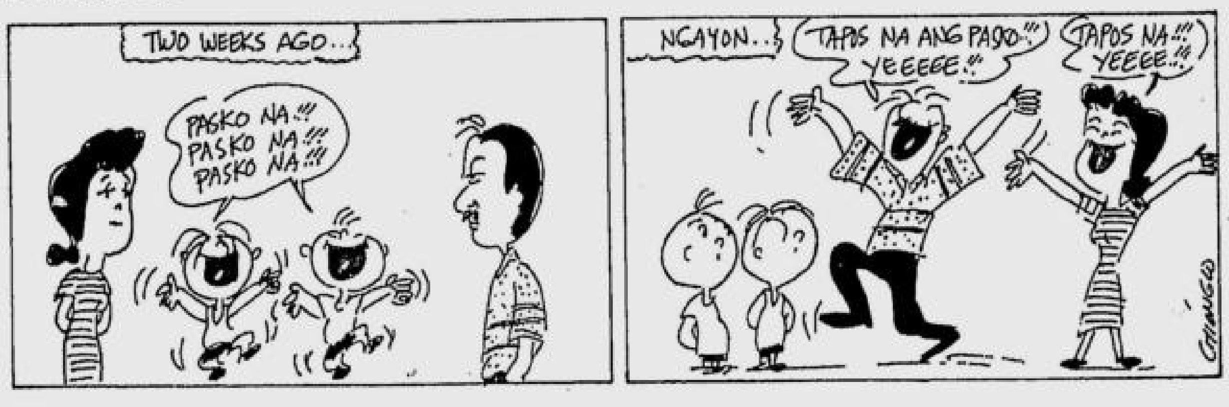
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


"ANDITO TAYO SA PART NA PAAKYAT NG ANTIPOLO, NA KUNG SAAN MARAMING MISTERYOSONG AKSIDENTE"
VROOOM!
ME NAGKWENTO NOON, BIGLA LANG DAW DUMILIM, WALA NA SILANG NAKITA...
TAPOS MERON NAMAN, ME NAGPAKITA RAW BIGLA NA WHITE LA...
AAAA!
BOO! HE HE
AYAN! TINAKOT-TAKOT MO HA?! SIGE!...
PA'NO BA 'TO? CLUTCH, KAMBYO 'TAS RELEASE DI, BA?
RRRR

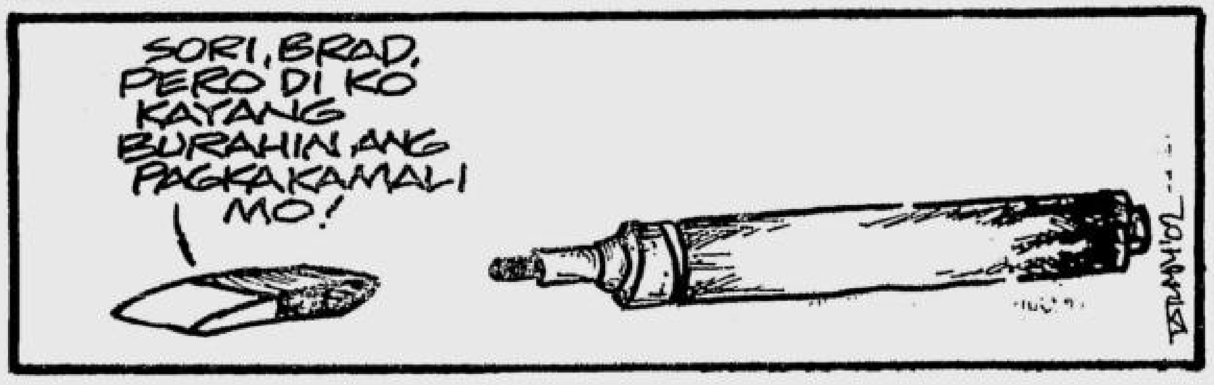
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TWO WEEKS AGO...
PASKO NA!!! PASKO NA!!! PASKO NA!!!
NGAYON...
TAPOS NA ANG PASKO!!! YEEEEE!!
TAPOS NA!!! YEEEE!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


SORI, BRAD, PERO DI KO KAYANG BURAHIN ANG PAGKAKAMALI MO!

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GLORIETTA 1
formerly QUAD

1	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
2	SPY GAME in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	YAMASHITA in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	GIRL FEVER in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS THX in DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	GLASS HOUSE Art Film in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	ON THE LINE in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	SPY GAMES in DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	SPY GAMES in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	HAPPY END in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	SPY GAMES in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	WEEKEND WITH POPS Onstage

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	SPY GAMES THX in DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	SPY GAMES in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE LORD OF THE RINGS in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	ON THE LINE in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	SPY GAME
2 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
3 (DTS)	GIRL FEVER
4 GOLD (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	SPY GAME
6 GOLD (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	WALANG IWANAN

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
3 (DTS)	BRO
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	RESERVE

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	SPY GAMES
2	PEKSMAN
3	GIRL FEVER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
6	SPY GAMES
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	SPY GAMES

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	BRO
2	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
3	PEKSMAN

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
A	BRO

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	BRO
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	HUBOG
5	WALANG IWANAN
6	ON THE LINE
7 (DTS)	SPY GAMES
8 (SDDS)	GLASS HOUSE
9 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	KAMITY TAO LAMANG

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	HUBOG
4 (SDDS)	SPY GAMES
5	PEKSMAN
6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
7 (DTS)	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	LORDS OF THE RING

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SPY GAMES
2	HUBOG
3	PEKSMAN
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
7 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	GIRL FEVER

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	SPY GAMES
2	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
3 (SDS)	HUBOG
4	PEKSMAN
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	SPY GAMES

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	WALANG IWANAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
Lords	RESERVE
Jennet	HUBOG

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	HUBOG

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	WALANG IWANAN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	SPY GAMES
3	WALANG IWANAN
4	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BRO
3	WALANG IWANAN
4	CLOSED
5	CLOSED
6	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
2	PEKSMAN

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	HUBOG
2	PEKSMAN
3 (DTS)	SPY GAMES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	PEKSMAN
3 (DOLBY)	SPY GAMES
4	HUBOG

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	WALANG IWANAN
2 (DOLBY)	SPY GAME
3 (DTS)	HUBOG
4	BAGONG BUWAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	HUBOG
2	ENGKWENTRO
3 (DOLBY)	MUSKETEERS
4 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
3	WALANG IWANAN
4 (DTS)	SPY GAMES

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	SPY GAMES
2	WALANG IWANAN
3 (DTS)	HUBOG
4	BATANG LANSANGAN
5	YAMASHITA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	HUBOG
3	SPY GAMES

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	WALANG IWANAN
2	HUBOG
3	SPY GAMES

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BRO
2	HUBOG
3	SUSMARYOSEP

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	BATANG LANSANGAN
2	WALANG IWANAN
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	HUBOG
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	HUBOG
2	YAMASHITA
3	BATANG LANSANGAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	THE SCORE
2	KING OF GLADIATOR
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	EARTHQUAKE
2	HUBOG
3	ROCKSTAR
4 (DTS EX)	YAMASHITA

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THX
CMG INTERNATIONAL
Tel. No.: 700-8314 to 15

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http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA
632-9115-16 / 633-7641 loc. 278

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	GIRLS FEVER
5	SPY GAMES
6	ON THE LINE
7	GLASS HOUSE
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	PEKSMAN

ERMITA
536-7809 TO 12

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	GIRLS FEVER
3	GLASS HOUSE
4	ON THE LINE
5	PEKSMAN
6	LORD OF THE RING
7	SPY GAMES

METRO EAST
632-9115-16 / 633-7641

1	GIRLS FEVER
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	HUBOG
5	SPY GAMES
6	KAMI'Y TAO LAMANG
7	PEKSMAN
8	BAGONG BUWAN

NOVALICHES
936-3229 TO 31

1	ON THE LINE
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	GIRLS FEVER
5	SPY GAMES
6	PEKSMAN
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAGONG BUWAN

IMUS
(046) 471-0188

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	KAMI'Y TAO LAMANG
3	GIRLS FEVER
4	SPY GAMES
5	PEKSMAN
6	BAGONG BUWAN

BACOLOD
(034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	MOST VALUABLE
6	BUBBLE BOY

ILOILO
(033) 336-9077 / 9071

1	THE MASKETTERS
2	MOST VALUABLE
3	SUSMARYOSEP
4	HUBOG
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	YAMASHITA

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	BAGONG BUWAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	WALANG IWANAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SPY GAME
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	GIRL FEVER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	ON THE LINE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	ROSARIO-18/TEMPRESS AFFAIR
ODEON	WALANG IWANAN
ODEON-2	LORD OF THE RING
ROBEN	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	KNIGHT'S TAIL / THE BODY

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
REMAR	WALANG IWANAN
REMAR-2	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BAGONG BUWAN
B	WALANG IWANAN
C	KAMIY TAO LAMANG

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79/633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

CAINTA RIZAL

S[illegible] LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
CINEMA-3	KAMI'Y TAO LAMANG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	GIRL FEVER
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	WALANG IWANAN
CINEMA-6	HUBOG
CINEMA-7	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-8	TATARIN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPY GAME
CINEMA-12	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	LORD OF THE RINGS

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-2	SPY GAMES
CINEMA-3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-4	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-5	THE GLASS HOUSE
CINEMA-6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	

Will the show . . .
(From page A21)

karampot na talent fee.

"At ngayon ngang nagkakatanggalan na ng mga regular na empleyado, maugong na maaugong na maaaring talents ang isunod na sibakin. Naaayy!! Okatokat (takot ako!) wala pa naman daw tayong matatanggap na separation pay.

"Matapos masabi ang lahat ng ito, ang 'Asap' na Mission: X ng talents . . . makialam, makiisa at maging tunay na Correspondents sa pag-alam ng The Buzz at impormasyon hinggil sa kahihinatnan ng mga kabuhayan natin dito sa ABS-CBN Channel 2.

"Sana'y na-Sapul Kayo D'yan, Pipol!

"O ano . . . Kakasa Ka Ba?"

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173886

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	SPY GAMES
6	PEKSMAN
7	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
8	GIRL FEVER

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 · 7161416

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	WALANG IWANAN
3	SPY GAMES
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	ON THE LINE
9	YAMASHITA
10	HUBOG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	GIRL FEVER
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	LORD OF THE RING
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	WALANG IWANAN
7	SPY GAMES
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
11	ON THE LINE
12	TATARIN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	SPY GAMES
3	YAMASHITA
4	ON THE LINE
5	GLASS HOUSE
6	LORD OF THE RINGS
7	GIRL FEVER
8	TATARIN
9	LORD OF THE RINGS
10	HUBOG
11	PEKSMAN
12	BAGONG BUWAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	ON THE LINE
3	SPY GAMES
4	LORD OF THE RING
5	GIRL FEVER
6	GLASS HOUSE
7	YAMASHITA
8	HUBOG
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	LORD OF THE RINGS
11	PEKSMAN
12	TATARIN

SM TUTUBAN
2514302

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	WALANG IWANAN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	SPY GAMES

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	WALANG IWANAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	GIRL FEVER
6	SPY GAMES
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	ON THE LINE
11	HUBOG
12	GLASS HOUSE

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088 • 8066782

1	GIRLS FEVER
2	ON THE LINE
3	SPY GAMES
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	YAMASHITA
6	HUBOG
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	WALANG IWANAN

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	KAMIY TAO LAMANG
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	WALANG IWANAN

SM CEBU
2313876

1	ON THE LINE
2	SPY GAMES
3	WOLF GIRL
4	DI KITA MA-REACH
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	PISNGI NG LANGIT
7	YAMASHITA

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	MASKETTEER
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	4 FATHERS
7	CLOSED
8	MVP

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	SPY GAMES
2	ROCKSTAR
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	ON THE LINE
6	HUBOG

SM SUCAT
8294975

1	PEKSMAN
2	SPY GAMES
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	4 FATHERS
3	ON THE LINE
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	WOLF GIRLS
6	SPY GAMES

dts DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX

Movies are subj[illegible]ge without prior notice

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: I hear you have a special dance presentation coming up. Can you tell us some of the highlights of the performance?

Guest: It's really special. The dancers, *sasayaw sila ng* interpretative, ng human nature. Tribal *ang dating*!

(Oh, wow!)

***

Host: Who is backing up your project?

Guest: You mean, as in financier?

Host: Yes, that's right.

Guest: Well, he's an Italy producer.

(Wow, Italy!)

***

Host: Can you share with us the secret of your success?

Guest: Well, when it's hard, as it's often hard these days, I pray a lot!

(Fine, but can you tell us more about the hard part?)

***

Host: Your schedule is so busy. Do you still have time for your children?

Guest: Yes, quality time!

Host: What do you mean by quality time?

Guest: Well, I try to spend as much time with them as possible, especially when they're asleep!

(Oh, so that's *quality* time!)

***

Host: You have a new film coming up?

Star: Yes, it's a very good movie, even if I don't say so.

Host: Uh—what?

Star: Yes, it is a very highly recommended!

(Next guest—please!)

***

Host: You had a hard time shooting the film?

Star: Yes, it was a lot of action shooting. When the shooting was finished everyday, I was so tired, I was full of sweet!

(How—sweet!)

***

Host: There were many big scenes?

Star: Many! But not just the actors, there were also thousands of expectators!

(All very expectant, we're sure!)

***

Host: What can you say about the controversial Metro filmfest this year?

Guest: Well, when it comes to awards, it's a matter of taste. It all depends on the taste of the board of judgers.

(Ah, so . . .)

***

Host: People are saying *na* "on" *na kayong dalawa*. What do you have to say about it? Confirm or deny?

Male starlet: Ladies first.

Female starlet: No, hindi pa kami. Swear!

Host: OK, *ganito na lang*: What is the quality you like most especially about her?

Male starlet: What the quality I most especially like about her is—everything!

(Duh!)

***

Host: *O sige, ito na lang*: How long have you known each other?

Female starlet: Since July last year.

Male starlet: No, no, I think—*mga* five-six months *na*.

(*E, di ganoon na nga yon*!)

***

Host: Can you compare local movies then and now?

Veteran star: Well, there's a big difference.

Host: For example?

Veteran star: Well, for example, before, in the 1950s, the stars were owned by the studios!

(Only figuratively speaking, we hope!)

Will the show go on at ABS-CBN?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I DON'T intend to dampen your spirits and ruin your new year mood, but allow me to give way to an explosive circular being passed around in the ABS-CBN office cubicles handed to me by my well-placed source.

I think it's only right that viewers know what's going on behind the scenes. Of course, there are always two sides to a story. Dollywood is open to ABS-CBN bosses in case they want to issue an official statement regarding the imminent strike of its workforce.

I opted to print the circular as it is to keep the sentiments intact. So much is lost in translation. Besides, some feelings just can't be rendered into another realm. It is my fervent hope that this crisis be resolved soonest.

How can viewers truly enjoy watching TV when there's a static signal within their favorite channel?

Yup, the show must go on, but so does life for hapless workers who are on the verge of being sacked.

"Magandang Umaga-Tanghali-Gabi Bayan!

"Sa muling pag-Arriba-Arriba ng krisis sa pinakamamahal nating ABS-CBN, tila tayo na namang talents ang uuwing agrabyado.

"Maalaala Mo Kaya nang, Wansapanataym, sa mga nakalipas na paglalagablab ng Flames nitong banta ng welga ng mga unyon. Talents ang palagiang inaasahan ng management na sumuporta sa kanila (halimbawa'y mag-uuwi ng mga gamit at sasakyan ng kumpanya, sasalo sa maiiwanang trabaho ng mga regular, atbp)?

"Pero Your Honor, sa oras na magkasundo na sila (Unyon at Management), asahan na namang talents ay muling mae-etsapuwera at pupulutin sa Tabing Ilog.

"Kawawa naman tayong talents . . . wala na nga tayong mga benepisyo, wala pa tayong Kabalikat (si Sen. ***Loren Legarda*** *kaya?) na lumalaban para sa atin.*

"Minsan nang sinabi ng management, 'Pangako sa 'Yo, mabibigyan kayo ng karampot na benepisyo sa pamamagitan ng IJM (Internal Job Management).

"Oo, nagpalit ng mga I.D. at nagkaroon ng access badge, pero ang mga benepisyo ay di mo matanaw kahit Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan. Hindi kaya I-sang J-oke sa M-anggagawa itong IJM na ipinagmamalaki ng management?

"Game KaNaBa? Sa iba pang bad news? Nito kasing nakaraang Pasko, maraming talents ang umuwing luhaan matapos makita ang natanggap nilang cash gift na ang karamihan ay hindi pa umabot sa katumbas ng isang buwang sweldo (13th month pay kumbaga). Bonus bang matatawag ang halagang P750?!?

"Hindi ba't ito'y isa nang True Crime laban sa talents na hindi nagkulang sa pagmamalasakit sa kumpanya?

"Hindi lang iyan. Meron akong kwento na nabasa sa diyaryo. Pumayag daw tayong mga talents sa pay cuts ngayong 2002? Verum Est (totoo ba ito)? Wala tayong Knowledge Power na mababawasan pa pala ang ating

WILL/A20

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

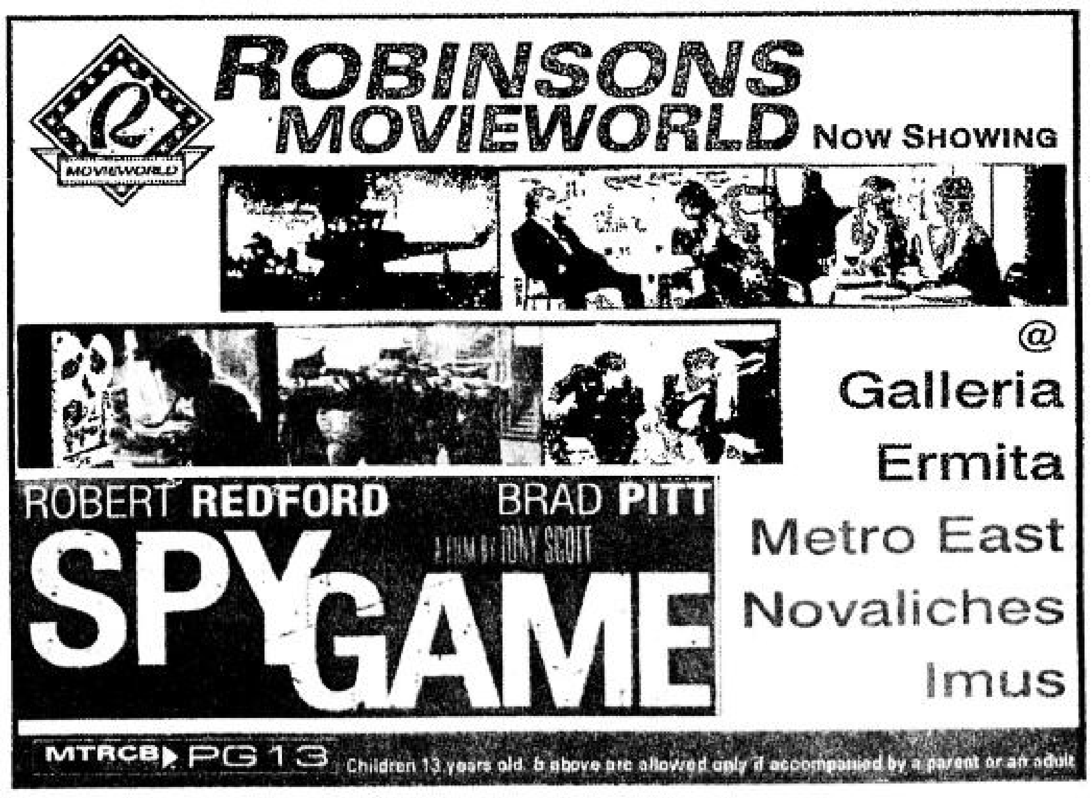
ON THE LINE - GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50	SPY GAME-P13 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:05, 2:35, 6:05, 9:35
LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 1:50, 5:20, 8:50	GLASS HOUSE - P 13 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:30	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:50, 3:20, 6:50, 10:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

JINGGOY ESTRADA
BAYANI AGBAYANI
and
JUDY ANN SANTOS
Walang Iwanan...! PeksMan!
Produced & Directed by: TOTO NATIVIDAD dgpi
NOW SHOWING

NOW SHOWING
It's not how you play the GAME...
Robert REDFORD
One agent must outwit the entire CIA to save his friend from execution within 24 hours.
SPY GAME
SKYFILMS
It's how the Game Plays you.
Brad PITT
MTRCB RATING PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

NOW SHOWING
She was one in a million.
His chances of finding her again are a million to one.
N*SYNC's LANCE BASS & JOEY FATONE
Featuring new music by *NSYNC, BRITNEY SPEARS, JESSICA FOLKER, VITAMIN C and many more!
ON THE LINE
On The Line original motion picture soundtrack now available under
SKYFILMS
MTRCB RATING G General Patronage
ALL AGES ADMITTED.


ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD
Now Showing
@
Galleria
Ermita
Metro East
Novaliches
Imus
ROBERT REDFORD
BRAD PITT
A FILM BY TONY SCOTT
SPY GAME
MTRCB PG 13
Children 13 years old & above are allowed only if accompanied by a parent or an adult

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GLORIETTA 1 & 4 / GREENBELT
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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A UNIQUE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE
That's What Showing At Ayala Cinemas.
MTRCB Rating: General Patronage
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS Sony Dynamic Digital Sound

One ring to rule them all. One ring to find them.
LORD OF THE RINGS
FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

AYALA CINEMAS
ARTFILM - GREENBELT
NOW SHOWING
Art Film
MTRCB RATING ▶ R Restricted
Strictly for ADULTS.
No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.

HAPPY END
JAN 9 TO 14, 2002
Happy End is the debut work of director Jung Ji-woo, who won acclaim with an earlier short film titled A Bit Bitter (literal translation: "Ginger"). This new work focuses on three characters: a banker who loses his job but finds a sense of fulfillment in his new life at home, taking care of his daughter and reading mysteries in the park; his wife, a successful career woman who manages a language institute; and her ex-boyfriend, with whom she became separated years earlier when he was drafted into the army.
NEXT ATTRACTIONS
THE KING IS DANCING (Restricted 18)
JAN. 15 to 19, 2002
TEARS OF THE BLACK TIGER (Restricted 18)
JAN. 20 to 22, 2002

SMART
Name That Tone
It's So Easy! This Game Is All Via Text. You'll Get A Clue About A Song, Then Download Its Tone, So You Can Guess The Title And Sing Your Way To Big Cash Prizes!
Correct! Your answer is the tone of the day.
SMART
CLUE: The modern Stone Age family- -need we say more.
CLUE: The song that starts with "I heard from a friend today and she said you're in town".
CLUE: [illegible] remember the scene from Top Gu [illegible] this son [illegible]
A Blast Of Over
₱500,000.00
In Cash Prizes To Be Raffled Away!
SMART
Simply Amazing!

SMART NAME THAT TONE SETS THE BEAT FOR SOUNDS AND PRIZES

Register Now!
Key in NTT and send to 234.
Then follow the succeeding instructions;

- Key in NAME <your full name> and send to 234.
- Key in BIRTH <mmddyyyy> and send to 234.
- Key in ADD <address> and send to 234.

NTT

Your registration automatically earns you a raffle entry for all weekly draws.

Play The Game!

The theme from the Emmy Award winning TV series on the lighter side of law.

You will then receive a clue about the mystery tone of the day.

Guess The Title By Downloading The Tone!

TONE

A. Ally McBeal
B. Law and Order
C. The Practice

Key in TONE and send to 234. Together with the downloaded tone, you will also receive the multiple choice set of ringtone titles.

Text in your Answer!

ANSWER A

Simply key in ANSWER <A, B or C> and send to 234. You will receive a message telling you whether you got the correct answer or not. There will only be one chance to guess the mystery tone of the day. Each correct answer earns you 5 raffle entries for the Weekly, Monthly and Grand draws.

Invite Your Friends And Earn More Raffle Entries!

INVITE 09182442322

Key in INVITE <your friend's SMART celfone number> and send to 234. Each invite earns you 1 raffle entry, to be added to your total raffle entries.

To redisplay the clue, key in SHOW and send to 234.

To check your raffle entries, key in POINTS and send to 234.

To temporarily stop receiving the daily questions, key in UPDATE OFF and send to 234.
To resume receiving the daily questions, key in UPDATE ON and send to 234.
The mystery tone of the day will be updated at 12 midnight daily.

Only subscribers with ringtone-download-capable handsets will be able to hear the mystery tone of the day. However, downloading is necessary to get the multiple choice set of ringtone titles. A subscriber without the necessary handset can still answer based on the clue and multiple choice set of ringtone titles.

WIN THESE PRIZES!

DRAW DATE	CASH PRIZE
GRAND DRAW: (1 winner) Feb. 11, 2002	₱200,000.00
MONTHLY DRAWS: (1 winner per draw) Jan. 14 and Feb. 11, 2002	₱50,000.00
WEEKLY DRAWS: (3 winners per draw) Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, and 11, 2002	₱10,000.00

**There will be a standard charge of ₱12.00 per ringtone download and ₱2.50 per message for all other transactions.*

**Cut-off time for the entries will be at 11:59 PM of the day before the draw date.*

**Ringtone-download-capable handsets are: Nokia 3210, 3310, 3330, 6150, 6210, 6250, 7110, 8210, 8250, 8310, and 9210.*

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BUSINESS

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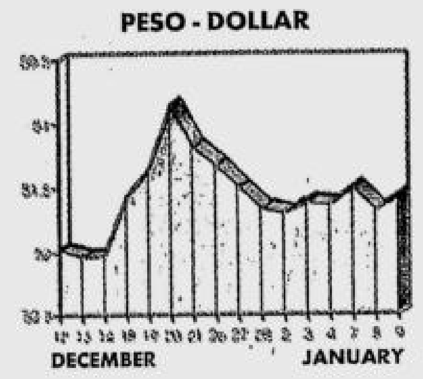
INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱ 51.560 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 9, 2002

¥ 132.52 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 9, 2002

GOLD:$279.60/280.10
per ounce Hong Kong,
Jan. 9, 2002

CURRENCIES

Jan 9, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.119194	1.000000	51.6370
Japan	Yen	0.008434	0.007536	0.3891
United Kingdom	Pound	1.610744	1.439200	74.3160
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143671	0.128370	6.6286
Switzerland	Franc	0.676251	0.604230	31.2006
Canada	Dollar	0.701337	0.626645	32.3581
Singapore	Dollar	0.605625	0.541126	27.9421
Australia	Dollar	0.586272	0.523834	27.0492
Bahrain	Dinar	2.968843	2.652661	136.9755
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.299250	0.267380	13.8067
Brunei	Dollar	0.605166	0.540716	27.9210
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025419	0.022712	1.1728
UAE	Dirham	0.304791	0.272331	14.0624
Korea	Won	0.000862	0.000770	0.0398
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.893500	46.1377
Brazil	Real	0.476253	0.425532	21.9732
Denmark	Kroner	0.134389	0.120077	6.2004
India	Rupee	0.023220	0.020747	1.0713
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.294525	0.263158	13.5887
Mexico	New Peso	0.121877	0.108897	5.6231
New Zealand	Dollar	0.483245	0.431779	22.2958
Norway	Kroner	0.125402	0.112047	5.7858
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018684	0.016694	0.8620
South Africa	Rand	0.098235	0.087773	4.5323
Sweden	Kroner	0.107790	0.09631	4.9732
Syria	Pound	0.025729	0.022989	1.1871
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032031	0.02862	1.4779
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001474	0.001317	0.0680

STOCK MARKET

Shares down 0.3%

SHARE prices dropped 0.3 percent yesterday with investors taking profits from earlier gains, brokers said.

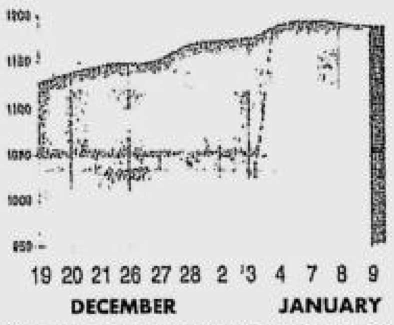
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 3.29 points to close at 1,183.68.

Turnover rose to 320 million shares worth P412 million from Tuesday's 298 million shares worth P357 million.

"It looks like most investors are resting after the market's continued rally in the past two weeks," Lawrence de Leon of KGI Secu-

SHARES/ B2

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

PDIC to service Unitrust depositors starting Jan. 18

PHILIPPINE Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) will start servicing claims for insured deposits with the closed Unitrust Development Bank (UDB) on Jan. 18.

PDIC requested the bank's depositors to file their claims at their respective branches from Jan. 18 onward, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Depositors are required to submit their evidences of deposits such as savings passbook or original certificates of time deposit and latest identification documents with the depositor's specimen signature. In the course of claims processing, PDIC representatives may require additional documents from the claimants.

The Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas placed Unitrust under receivership last Jan. 4. The PDIC took over as receiver of Unitrust on the afternoon of the same day. The Bank's head office is in Makati while its 12 branches are located in Makati, Quezon City, Caloocan, Manila, Marikina, Parañaque and San Juan. Its total deposit liabilities is estimated at P290 million representing about 18,000 accounts.

JP Morgan bullish on peso

INVESTORS should embrace a more bullish view on the Philippine peso and the Singapore dollar because of improving economic fundamentals, JP Morgan Chase said in a recent research report released in Singapore.

It recommended buying the peso in the dollar/peso six-month forward, with the view of an end-June target of 50 to the dollar.

The bank also recommended going long on the Singapore dollar in the three-month dollar/Sing forward, and sell the dollar/Sing in the spot market to target an end-March level of 1.8250.

While advising investors to avoid the Korean won and Taiwan dollar because of the struggling yen, JP Morgan Chase suggested the Sing dollar may start decoupling with the yen given recent surprisingly strong economic data.

"Any further yen weakness should not weigh too heavily so long as the euro is at the same time strengthening," it said, adding the euro and yen share a similar weighting of in the bank's estimated trade-weighted basket of currencies for the Sing dollar. The bank said separately that the levels were just under 11 percent.

The peso, too, was expected to benefit from better fundamentals as well as a more stable political environment.

"Hitting our end-June target of 50 (pesos) would yield 750 basis points, 413 basis points coming just from carry," the bank said. *Reuters*

Gov't signs agreement on $500-M bond float

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE GOVERNMENT has closed a deal with Credit Suisse-First Boston and Morgan Stanley to handle its $500-million, 15-year global bond issue at a price favorable to the country.

The borrowing was originally set at only $250 million through a 15-year private placement to be handled solely by Credit Suisse. However, improved investor appetite prompted the government to double the size of the debt issue and convert it into global bonds to be offered to retail and institutional investors.

The government had planned to issue $500 million worth of global bonds in July last year but adverse market conditions forced it to shelve the flotation.

An INQUIRER source said the government was expecting the proceeds of the bond issue to come in by Jan. 18. Credit Suisse is the lead underwriter and Morgan Stanley is the lead arranger for the issue.

The debt instrument, the source said, would offer a 10-year put option to investors. This means that an investor can sell the bonds back to the Philippine government on the 10th year.

"It is like borrowing at a 10-year rate with a 15-year maturity," one of the sources said.

The Philippine borrowing was priced at 4.5 percentage points over prevailing 10-year US Treasuries that stood at 5.08 percent yesterday. Since the issue was oversubscribed, sources said the government might still be able to reduce its cost.

From a high of more than six percentage points over 10-year US Treasuries, the spread on the Philippines' long-term, dollar-denominated debt papers have tightened to a little more than four percentage points in recent weeks.

A fixed-income trader from a foreign bank said that the Philippine global bond issue would still provide attractive yields to investors "considering the extent of the rally of (Philippine) bonds since November."

The put option, according to the trader, was also an added attraction for investors.

"There is a lot of liquidity in the market and banks, both foreign and local, are scrambling to get a piece of the global bond issue. There had been huge interest on the bonds," said another trader.

But the government is not inclined to offer more than $500 million worth of global bonds so as not to saturate the market. "We want to cap it at $500 million so that we could have a better pricing," a government source said.

With the fresh borrowing, the national government needs to raise less than $400 million to complete a $1.4-billion foreign financing requirement for 2002.

Last year, the government raised $388 million from a yen bond issue and $117 million from the issuance of dollar treasury bills through the dollar-deposit units of local-operating banks.

The $1.4 billion would be used by the government to help finance part of its estimated P130-billion budget deficit this year.

Fed officials differ on timing of rebound

WASHINGTON—Top Federal Reserve officials on Tuesday agreed the US economy would recover this year, but amid mixed signals from a spate of recent economic data, they differed on how swift that turnaround would be.

And even though their assessments of when this recession would end were divergent, they all signaled the central bank might not be quite done cutting interest rates.

After delivering a speech in Frankfurt, New York, Fed president William McDonough said there were signs the US economy was now reaching its trough and that the recession, which began last March, could be shallow.

"The economy is giving signals that it is at or near the bottom," McDonough told reporters, noting still that business investment remains weak.

With upbeat data emerging in recent weeks, some private economists have begun to speculate that the recession will likely end soon or that it may have already ended.

Among such data was a report last week showing the pace of US job losses slowed to 124,000 in December after declines averaging 400,000 in October and November.

But even with signs of improvement on the labor, service and manufacturing fronts, the timing and pace of such a recovery remain unclear to key Fed officials.

6 foreign firms vie for $40-M PNOC deal

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

SIX foreign firms are vying for the contract to build PNOC Energy Development Corp.'s $40-million geothermal power plant near Mt. Kanlaon in Northern Negros.

PNOC-EDC chair Sergio Apostol yesterday said the six firms have submitted their prequalification requirements for the bidding, which is slated within the first quarter.

"We will know who have prequalified before the end of this month," Apostol said.

The firms include Marubeni Corp., Kanematsu Corp., Mitsubishi Corp., Ormat Industries, Alstom Philippines and the consortium of P. Kiewit & Sons, Bibb & Associates and Northeast China International Electric Power Corp.

The PNOC-EDC chief added that the full turnkey contract included the engineering design, supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of 40-megawatt facility.

"We hope to start construction by June this year to be able to meet the scheduled commissioning in 2004," Apostol said.

The former Leyte congressman said they planned to operate the facility as a merchant power plant, which would sell power directly to consumers.

"(Even) in its planning stage, we were already studying the merchant option for the power plant since we knew that the power industry would eventually be restructured," he said.

GLOBE TELECOM

NOTICE TO ALL WARRANT HOLDERS

28 November 2001

Dear Stockholder:

We write you in relation to the P6.058 Billion rights offering (Record Date: December 17, 1997) of Common shares and Warrants in the proportion of one (1) Warrant attached to and detachable from every one and a half (1.5) rights shares subscribed in the capital stock of the Company.

We would like to remind you, as a Warrant Holder, that the deadline for you to exercise your right to subscribe to Common Shares is January 28, 2002.

As stated in the Notice to Shareholders on the Declassification and Reverse Stock Split (distributed August 2000), the exercise price for the warrants is P164.50 (post reverse stock-split).

Should you fail to submit the required documents (and payment) on or before the due date (in accordance with the Exercise Procedures (please see attached Relevant Sections in the Information Memorandum Relating to the P6.058 Billion Rights Offer) the Warrant Instrument shall lapse and have no legal and binding effect.

Please feel free to contact the following should you have any questions:

Malou Rustia-Santos	Tel. No. + 632 730 2820
James Pabustan	Tel. No. + 632 730 3494

However, if you have exercised your Warrants before receipt of this notice, please disregard this notice.

Very truly yours,

DELFIN C. GONZALEZ, JR.
Senior Vice President - Chief Financial Officer

Relevant Sections in the Information Memorandum Relating to the P6.058 Billion Rights Offer

Exercise Period

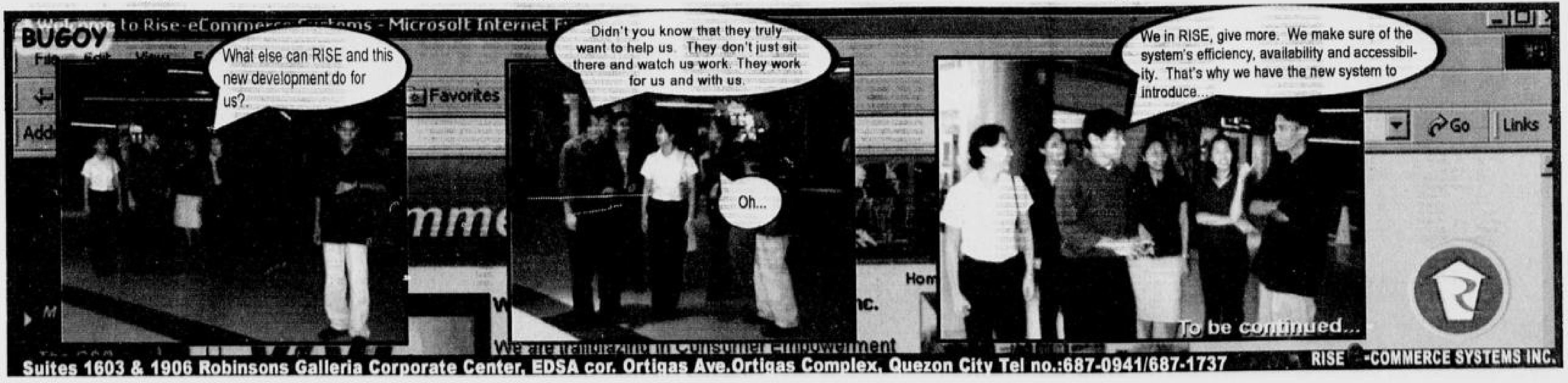
The Warrant Holder may exercise his right to subscribe up to the number of Exercise Shares as are equivalent to the number of Warrants held, at any time during the Exercise Period which commenced on any Trading Day six (6) months after full payment of the Rights Shares (or from January 26, 1999) up to the close of business for the Trading Day four (4) years from date of start of the Offer (or January 26, 2002). If for any reason, January 26,2002 is not a Trading Day in Metro Manila, the set date shall be the succeeding Trading Day after the above-mentioned date. As at January 26, 2002, (or if January 26, 2002 is not a Trading Day in Metro Manila, the next Trading Day after such date) the Warrants and the Warrant Instrument shall lapse and shall have no legal and binding effect.

[illegible]ercise Procedures

To exercise the right to subscribe under the Warrants, a Warrant Holder must complete, execute and deliver, at the Warrant Holder's expense during the regular business hours on any Banking Day during the Exercise Period at the specified offices (4/F BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City) of the Bank of the Philippine Islands - Stock Transfer Office (the "Warrant Registrar"), a duly accomplished Subscription Form appearing at the back of the Warrant Certificate together with the following documents:

(i) the fully-endorsed Warrant Certificate with the subscription form section properly filled out;
(ii) the payment for the full Exercise Price;
(iii) corporate authorizations allowing the exercise of the right to purchase the Exercise Shares if the Warrant Holder is a corporation;
(iv) signature card with the specimen signature(s) of the beneficial owner(s) of the Exercise Shares, or if the beneficial owner is a corporation, the specimen signatures of the authorized signatories;
(v) the payment of any amount that may be required by the Warrant Registrar in the exercise of the rights under the Warrants,

The Warrant Certificate and accompanying Subscription Form and the other documentary requirements for the exercise of the rights under the Warrants once delivered and received to the Warrant Registrar shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the Company. The exercise of the Warrants shall be deemed completed upon the surrender and endorsement of the Warrant Certificate as provided above and the payment of the full Exercise Price. If payment is effected by check, then the payment shall be deemed complete upon the actual receipt of the funds by the Company.


to Rise-eCommerce Systems - Microsoft Internet E
BUGOY
What else can RISE and this new development do for us?.
Favorites
Didn't you know that they truly want to help us. They don't just sit there and watch us work. They work for us and with us.
Oh...
We in RISE, give more. We make sure of the system's efficiency, availability and accessibility. That's why we have the new system to introduce...
Go
Links
To be continued...
RISE -COMMERCE SYSTEMS INC.
Suites 1603 & 1906 Robinsons Galleria Corporate Center, EDSA cor. Ortigas Ave.Ortigas Complex, Quezon City Tel no.:687-0941/687-1737

Scam all ye faithful

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IF we are not careful, we can become another Albania.

That country, says the American humorist P. J. O'Rourke, "has the distinction of being the only country ever destroyed by a chain letter—a nation devastated by a Ponzi racket, a land ruined by the pyramid scheme."

Now in the Ponzi racket, most probably named after its originator, Purificacion M. Racket, but I'm not sure, so don't quote me, the "investors" get sucked in by promises of unbelievably, exceptionally and unusually huge returns.

Seriously, after the pyramiding schemes collapsed in Albania in the late 1990s, the victims wasted no time to destroy the country through riots, looting, vandalism and actual rebellion. Well, all those poor victims thought they were already rich.

To a certain extent, the same thing is happening here. Financial scams are becoming a whole industry—and, unlike the automotive industry, even thriving. The Securities and Exchange Commission is swooping down on at least four suspects.

Not to be modest, I know it even as I sit here, staring blankly at the ceiling, as I scratch my . . .

* * *

ANYWAY, all those four suspected scams are offering "interest" or "returns" or "earnings" of 3 to 6 percent. Low, you say? Well, that's for every month.

So what we have here, I think, are out-and-out scams in such a huge proportion, they have built a faithful following. What's that—oh, scam all ye faithful?

One of those four suspects is Multitel. This is the Multinational Telecom Investors Corp. It is offering "investors" up to 5-percent return per month.

Can you imagine that? Five percent a month! On even just a straight line basis, not even on a compounded basis, that's already 60 percent a year. Wow!

I wonder what kind of investments on this earth and in this lifetime can give that much return—and you, as a mere passive investor, at that.

I don't know of any venture which can give that much, unless it has something to do with gun-running or drug trafficking or white slavery or politics. No, erase, delete.

But why would those guys who do those crimes want to give away money to the public? Maybe they just want to share their good fortune. Some benevolent criminals!

* * *

BUT I only came across Multitel because a good friend of mine tried to convince me to "invest." Apparently, a good friend of hers, in turn, also asked her to "invest."

From what I gathered, it seems that Multitel was even giving a special offer. If I would be stupid enough to "invest" before Jan. 15 this year, I would get higher returns on my money which I perhaps would never see again.

Ordinarily, according to the recruiter, Multitel only gives a return of 4 percent a month. Under the special offer, it is willing to give as much as 5 percent.

What's so special about the date Jan. 15, anyway? Perhaps it has something to do with the spirit of the holidays. It is the season of giving, I know, but I am not sure Multitel applies goodness of heart in its business deals. It has a bad record!

* * *

ALLEGEDLY, based on its own materials, Multitel is supporting the second largest industry in the whole wide world. And that's the telecommunication business.

It supposedly has a tie-up with the so-called Multinational Lending Corp. of New York, USA, which supposedly is its principal.

It seems Multitel is part of a worldwide fund pool which provides capital to that US company. So far, so good.

But why would an American company pay so much "return"—okay, let's call it "usurious interest"—on money from a poor Third World country like the Philippines?

If it is such a good business, to start with, why would that American company simply not raise much, much cheaper funds in the world's richest country—America?

To think, interest rates in the United States are at their lowest in probably a thousand years. Funding is so cheap there right now, money lost its snob appeal.

* * *

MY hopes would be dashed, as it turned out, even before I could enjoy any hard-earned "return" from "investments" in Multitel, even as I did nothing but just scratch my . . .

Anyway, I found out that the SEC already issued a CDO to Multitel. That's right, a cease-and-desist order! In business, a CDO from SEC is the equivalent of castration.

It means whatever it is Multitel's doing, whatever name or sound or color it uses to hide that it is really just selling "securities," it can no longer do it.

And yet—YET—Multitel is at it again. So how is that possible? Well, according to SEC Commissioner Fe Eloisa Gloria, the SEC lifted the CDO. Whaaat?

Well, it seems that Multitel promised the SEC that it would no longer market or sell securities to the public. And the SEC, from what I gathered, believed it!

And that's it? Not even just, say, a whack of the baseball bat on the head as punishment? Well, obviously, Multitel did not learn its lesson.

* * *

NOW regarding the other three suspects, the SEC compliance and enforcement department wants to follow due process.

That's according to its head, lawyer Tomas Syquia, who is the son of a well-known international lawyer.

He said that, without due process, the commission cannot do anything to stop those scams which are already duping the public. Great!

I actually talked to Syquia over the telephone yesterday. He only wants, in his own words, "to follow procedures."

In other words, no way for the SEC to stop Multitel and the other three, whose names I must withhold for now, at least until the SEC finds a way to stop them.

It also turns out that Syquia's boys have already investigated one of those four suspects. They did not find anything wrong.

From what I gathered, it's all because the suspected company did not provide the SEC the evidence. Don't you just love those SEC boys?

RISING BAD LOANS, LOWER DEMAND

Bank lending down 3.3% in Oct.

BANK lending continued to decline in October as bad loans piled up and demand softened with the slowing economy, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP data showed that the commercial banking system's outstanding loans fell by 3.3 percent from year-ago levels to P1.4 trillion as of end-October.

It said that the slowdown in economic activity, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and the rise in banks' non-performing loans (NPLs) had prompted lenders "to maintain a prudent lending stance."

In the same period, the NPL ratio of commercial banks rose by 0.9 percentage points from the previous month to 18.8 percent.

The slack in bank lending "also reflected the continued weakness in external demand as well as the presence of spare capacity, which has limited the need for additional borrowings," the central bank said.

The country's merchandise exports were estimated to have plunged by 15 percent last year, and the government issued a flat export forecast for 2002.

The BSP said the average capacity utilization of manufacturing firms stood at 75.9 percent in October.

Lending to financial institutions, real estate and business services, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, storage and communication, construction, and mining also fell.

It said loans to utilities rose amid sustained demand for electricity, gas and water, while lending to agriculture remained unchanged from the year earlier level. *AFP*

Allied Bank backs out of deal with ASB

By Elena R. Torrijos

ALLIED Banking Corp. has backed out of an agreement to write off the ASB Group of Companies' P1.033-billion debt due to legal impediments.

"The execution of the agreement may violate (provisions of) the General Banking Act and rules of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas," explained Allied in a letter to the ASB group.

Also, Allied Bank said it could not possibly implement the agreement until after other pending petitions opposing the rehabilitation plan are acted upon by the SEC.

Allied Bank and ASB earlier forged a memorandum of agreement for a debt-to-asset swap where the bank will write off ASB's obligations in exchange for real estate assets worth P994.74 million.

The MOA, which was approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission, was in line with the rehabilitation program that was designed to ease the real estate firm's debt problems.

Under the agreement, Allied Bank committed to withdraw its claim over certain pieces of ASB property including 73 units in BSA Suites, 40 units in BSA Mansion, six units in Perla Mansion and a vacant lot at Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

The ASB group owes more than 700 individual creditors P3.9 billion and P5 billion to various creditor-banks.

Allied Bank is one of the group's biggest creditors that also include Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., United Coconut Planters Bank, Equitable PCI Bank and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

Air Philippines to retrench 300 employees

AIR Philippines Corp. will lay off about 300 employees as part of a belt-tightening program to ease the effects of a global slowdown in the airline industry.

Persons familiar with the situation said Air Philippines, the third airline to be designated as a flag carrier, was forced to trim its workforce and operating costs to keep itself afloat.

Tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan owns 70 percent of Air Philippines. Tan is also majority owner of No. 1 carrier Philippine Airlines Inc.

The family of "plastics king" William Gatchalian controls 30 percent of Air Philippines.

An industry source said Air Philippines would retrench employees across all departments, including marketing, sales, administration, operations and finance over a one-month period.

The airline's retrenchment program reportedly began on Tuesday. It currently has 850 regular and 79 contractual employees.

Air Philippines is the second Philippine carrier to lay off its workers since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States that sent most major international airlines into a tailspin.

Last month, PAL sacked about 150 probationary cabin attendants.

Air Philippines said despite the scale-down and a sharp increase in war-related insurance premiums, it would go ahead with its plan to fly to destinations abroad.

Insurance companies have imposed a unilateral P50-million limit on third-party war-risk insurance cover.

Local airlines are already reeling from higher fuel prices and a slowdown in tourist arrivals.

Air Philippines has applied for an 11-percent to 14-percent fare increase with the Civil Aeronautics Board to help it cope with a difficult economic environment.

It is also seeking a P300 to $6 insurance surcharge per passenger to cover the higher war-related insurance premiums. *Doris C. Dumlao*

GTEB urges garment, textile firms to consolidate operations

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE GARMENTS and Textile Export Board is urging the local apparel and fabric industry to merge and consolidate their operations in preparation for the phase-out of quotas in 2005.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II made this call as he projected flat export growth for garments and textiles this year due to the recession in the United States, Europe and Japan.

Roxas cited the growing trend toward merger and consolidation globally to optimize resources and respond to increasing buyer demand for improved services.

There are currently 1,200 factories employing 400,000 workers in the $3-billion garments and textile industry.

Roxas said most foreign buyers prefer to deal with suppliers that could provide a wide range of products and services based on superior price-value ratios, consistent quality, flexible quantity and speed-to-market capabilities.

Roxas said the country's handicaps such as high labor costs and raw materials could be offset by enhanced productivity through technology upgrade, better work ethics, social compliance, and infusion of higher value-added inputs such as design and fabric sourcing.

The GTEB is set to meet representatives from small and medium garment companies, most of them are not part of any industry organization, to urge them to formulate a common development strategy with their peers. This is to boost competitiveness when the United States, the world's biggest market for apparel and fabrics, discontinue its quota program which has benefited favored countries with a ready market such as the Philippines.

"It is about time that our local garment firms realize that only those with carefully laid out business plans will make it through in the open garment market. There is an oversupply of sewing capacity around the world; new low-cost suppliers have emerged, and supply is growing faster than the market (demand)," Roxas said.

Roxas is projecting flat growth for the garments industry this year due to doubts on whether the major foreign markets would come out of their slump this year. The GTEB reported that garments and textile exports fell by 7 percent last year to $2.974 billion from $3.2 billion in 2000.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, January 9, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59	59	58	58	487,200
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	15	15	15	15	3,000
Citystate Savings Bank	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25	25	24.25	24.75	706,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	200	200	199	199	17,200
Philippine National Bank	63.5	65	63.5	65	8,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17	17	17	17	4,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	15.5	15.5	15.25	15.5	29,600
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.12	1.24	1.12	1.24	102,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1320	1320	1320	1320	110
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1040	1050	1040	1045	14,100
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	23.5	24	26,600
Diversified Fin. Network	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	680	690	680	680	23,150
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	500,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	8,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	420	427.5	417.5	427.5	26,120
Ivantage Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	110,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	36,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.75	23	22.75	22.75	121,600
Manila Electric Co. B	32	32	31	31.5	1,015,400
Petron Corp.	1.46	1.52	1.46	1.5	2,809,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.46	2.7	2.46	2.7	13,417,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	3,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	40,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	70,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	110,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	547,500
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	5,800
RFM Corp.	2.28	2.3	2.28	2.3	724,000
San Miguel Corp. A	43.5	44	43.5	44	123,400
San Miguel Corp. B	55	55	55	55	162,100
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.65	4.7	8,995,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.54	1.54	1.42	1.44	2,015,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	11.75	2,500
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.85	0.84	0.85	770,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	460,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	4,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.53	0.58	0.53	0.57	11,750,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	300,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	6,630,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	600,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.84	0.85	0.84	0.84	300,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	25	25.5	25	25.5	17,900
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	80,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
Ionics Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	15,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	25,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	3,480,000
Music Corp.	0.24	0.26	0.23	0.26	32,470,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	570,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.25	0.33	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Federal Chemicals Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	1,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	200,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	4,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.52	0.48	0.48	1,050,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	30,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	390,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	57,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	952,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.74	1.82	1.72	1.8	418,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	665	670	665	670	3,700
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	48,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series I	10	10	10	10	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	3,500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	20,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	2,951,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	1,300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	220,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	30,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.74	3,368,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	9,000
SM Development Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	16,556,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	30,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	10,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	1,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	2.75	2.95	2.75	2.95	6,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	50,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	500,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	70,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	20,000,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,200,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000

Shares down 0.3%

(From page B1)

rities said.

"There is some caution, although the general outlook for the year is quite positive given the foundation of lower interest rates," he added.

Analysts said there was slight buying in mid-session with most stocks still below their pre-Sept. 11 price level.

The composite index closed at 1,294.09 points on Sept. 11, hours before suspected Muslim militants slammed hijacked passenger jets into the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon in Washington. *AFP*

DISCLOSURES

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co. confirmed it was opposed to **ASB Group of Companies'** plans to distribute to unsecured creditors P50 million from the P200 million total proceeds of the sale of **DBS Philippines Inc.** shares.

* * *

IN a separate disclosure the other day, Metrobank confirmed that it had obtained a $100-million debt capital or tier-two investment arranged by Dunmore Asset Ltd.

* * *

GUOCO Holdings Philippines Inc. changed its corporate name to **Prime Orion Philippines Inc.** but the change in name will not yet be reflected in the computer system of the **Philippine Stock Exchange**.

* * *

CROWN Equities Inc. announced the resignation of Gloria Tan-Climaco and Gabriel Yong as directors of the company.

* * *

RFM Corp. declared a quarterly cash dividend of P0.118 per share to stockholders of record as of Dec. 28 and shall be payable on Jan. 11. Also, the company will be paying on Jan. 11 its deferred preferred cash dividends of P0.1167 per share to stockholders of record as of June 27 and P0.118 per share to stockholders of record as of Sept. 27.

* * *

COSMOS Bottling Corp.'s stockholders of record as of Dec. 20, 2001 will become stockholders of **FWBC Holdings Inc.** beginning Jan. 9, 2002. These stockholders shall be entitled to property dividends and shall receive their stock certificates representing shares in FWBC and/or cash representing their fractional shares.

* * *

SQL Wizard denied having any information that could explain the unusual movement in its share price.

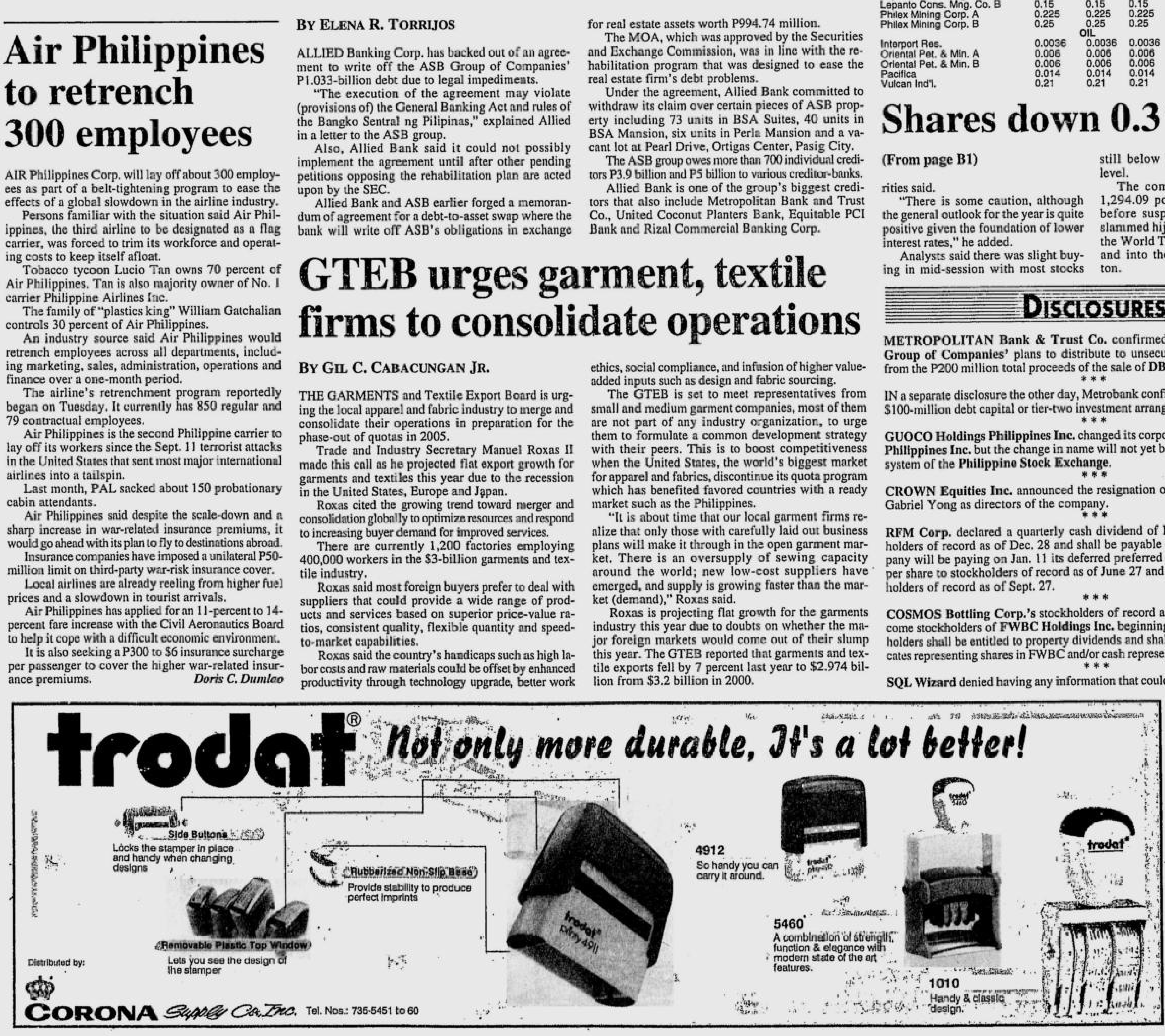
* * *

STOCKHOLDERS of **Pure Foods Corp.** as of Jan. 18 will be given a written assent form in relation to the planned change in the company's name to **San Miguel Pure Foods Corp.** The forms are to be returned on or before Feb. 15.

* * *

ACESITE Hotel Corp. announced the election of former Philippine Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez Sr. as director of the company to serve the remaining term of the late Emmanuel Pelaez Jr.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research



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Neda says economy grew 3.7% in Q4

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority said yesterday the economy probably grew 3.7 percent in the fourth quarter on the back of robust figures from the agriculture and service sectors.

For the full year, Neda said the economy probably hit the government's target of a 3.3-percent growth.

"We will realize the 3.3-percent gross domestic product growth target based on the records, particularly because of the performance of the agriculture and services sectors and also because of the last-quarter upsurge in consumer spending," Neda Deputy Director General Gilbert Llanto told reporters.

Llanto said the country's year-end growth figures should surprise skeptics, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

These institutions have expressed doubt over the Philippines' ability to meet its target, with the IMF saying growth will probably be at 2.9 percent, the World Bank 2.7 percent and the ADB 2.5 percent.

Analysts have described the government's announcement that growth will hit 3.7 percent in the fourth quarter as ambitious, but the administration's economic managers are confident the goal has been achieved despite a faltering local industrial sector.

He cited a new report from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics that indicated that palay yield had risen by 4.6 percent to almost 13 million metric tons last year.

Harvests of corn, another main staple, also expanded by 12 percent, he added.

Llanto said the use of hybrid seeds and the efficient rehabilitation of the country's irrigation system lifted agricultural output.

"With this strong growth in agriculture performance, you'd expect lower food prices as already reflected in our year-end (December) inflation of 3.9 percent, which was the lowest since July 2000," he said.

GDP refers to the total amount of goods produced and services rendered in the country in a given year.

At 3.3 percent, the GDP growth projection for 2001 was lower than the previous year's 4 percent.

The lower estimate took into account a global economic slowdown, which weighed heavily on local industries.

Neda documents showed that the industry sector was expected to have grown by only 2 percent last year against the 3.9-percent expansion recorded the previous year.

The sector's weak performance was traced to a growth slowdown in the manufacturing sector from 5.6 percent to 2.3 percent year-on-year.

The mining and quarrying sector was also expected to have contracted by 3.4 percent against a 10-percent growth in 2000.

The agriculture, fishery and forestry sector was estimated to have grown by 3.3 percent, the same as in 2000.

The inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee, the government's fiscal and economic planning unit, is set to meet on Monday to discuss the assessment for 2001 and the outlook for the new year.

The services and agriculture sectors were the country's main growth drivers in the first three quarters of the year, expanding by 4 percent and 2.9 percent while the industry sector stood as the laggard with only a 2.1-percent growth.

In the first nine months of the year, Philippine GDP grew by 2.9 percent.

Llanto said there would likely be a lag of one to two quarters before the Philippines could benefit from any rebound in the US economy this year.

However, he said the government would keep a GDP growth target of 4 to 4.5 percent for 2002 due to the expected rebound in the industry sector and the continued robust expansion of the agriculture and services sectors.

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More anomalies hurled against Unitrust owners

By Elena R. Torrijos

FORMER officials of shuttered lender Unitrust Development Bank yesterday leveled more charges of mismanagement against the group of a self-styled cult leader who had built companies based on his promise of "world salvation."

In a news conference, former Unitrust president Francis Yuseco disclosed that shortly after he took over the reins of the bank, the group of G. Cosmos Philippines Inc. chair Genta Ogami attempted to borrow about P170 million through an unsecured loan from Unitrust.

The bank's board led by Yuseco flatly rejected the loan, but it seemed that Ogami's group was able to get P18 million in loans in violation of the rules of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on loans to directors, officers, stockholders and related interests.

Yuseco also revealed that based on reports fed to local law enforcement agencies, banking and securities officials. Ogami was apparently involved in cross-border pyramiding in Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Ogami, who is married to a Filipina and has an address at the posh Ayala Alabang subdivision, was reportedly convicted of fraud in Japan.

Both Philippine and Japanese authorities are reportedly out to arrest Ogami.

Unitrust Bank, a small thrift bank with P700 million in assets, declared a bank holiday on Friday following a P138-million bank run and the resignation of its officers and employees. That same day, the Monetary Board, the highest policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, approved the bank's closure and placed it under the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.'s receivership.

Yuseco questioned the bank's decision to declare a holiday.

"We are wondering why they declared a bank holiday. When we left, the bank was still very liquid," he said. "On that day they declared a bank holiday, the bank had a very healthy cash position—P43 million—and there were other assets."

Yuseco added that he learned that after he and his group left, P12 million was taken out from the bank's vault and checks were issued to G. Cosmos.

NEWS BRIEFS

38% hike in Manila Water profits

MANILA Water Co. said yesterday it chalked up a 38-percent increase in profits last year.

In an interview, company president Antonino Aquino said Manila Water earned between P160 million and P170 million in 2001, up from the previous year's P123 million, the second straight year that it posted growth despite reeling from the peso's weakness against the US dollar.

Aquino told reporters Manila Water's earnings came from fiscal prudence and additional customers.

The company's capital spending significantly brought down its non-revenue water losses from 63 percent in 1997 to 47 percent as of June last year.

"The reduction in our NRWs translated to a steady cash flow base for Manila Water," he said.

Manila Water's outstanding capital stood at P2.5 billion as of December 2000. *Christine A. Gaylican*

Psalm, Enron deal this month

ENERGY Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said yesterday the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. might buy out this month independent power producer Enron Power Corp. Philippines' contract with the National Power Corp.

"For Psalm to sign an agreement with Enron, a higher discount rate must be offered, and it looks like it's going to happen," Perez said.

Created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Psalm is mandated to assume all of Napocor's liabilities as of end-2000 as well as its assets slated for privatization.

Enron initially offered a 12-percent discount on the future cash flow it expected from Napocor, but the government was eyeing a rate that was "of the high teens."

"Psalm and Enron are still discussing. We expect something by the end of the month," Perez said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

DOTC to ask for aid

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications said yesterday it would ask the Japanese government for financial aid in constructing the $100-million flyover going to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 set to start operations by year's end.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said in an interview the government would make the project one of the points to be discussed with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who arrived here yesterday.

The flyover, he said, was no longer part of the government's build-operate-transfer agreement with Naia-3 builder Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc.

"There will be (a flyover), but the government will be the one to undertake it," he told the INQUIRER.

The elevated roadway will start at the Fort Bonifacio grounds, cross the highway and end at Naia-3. *Abigail L. Ho*

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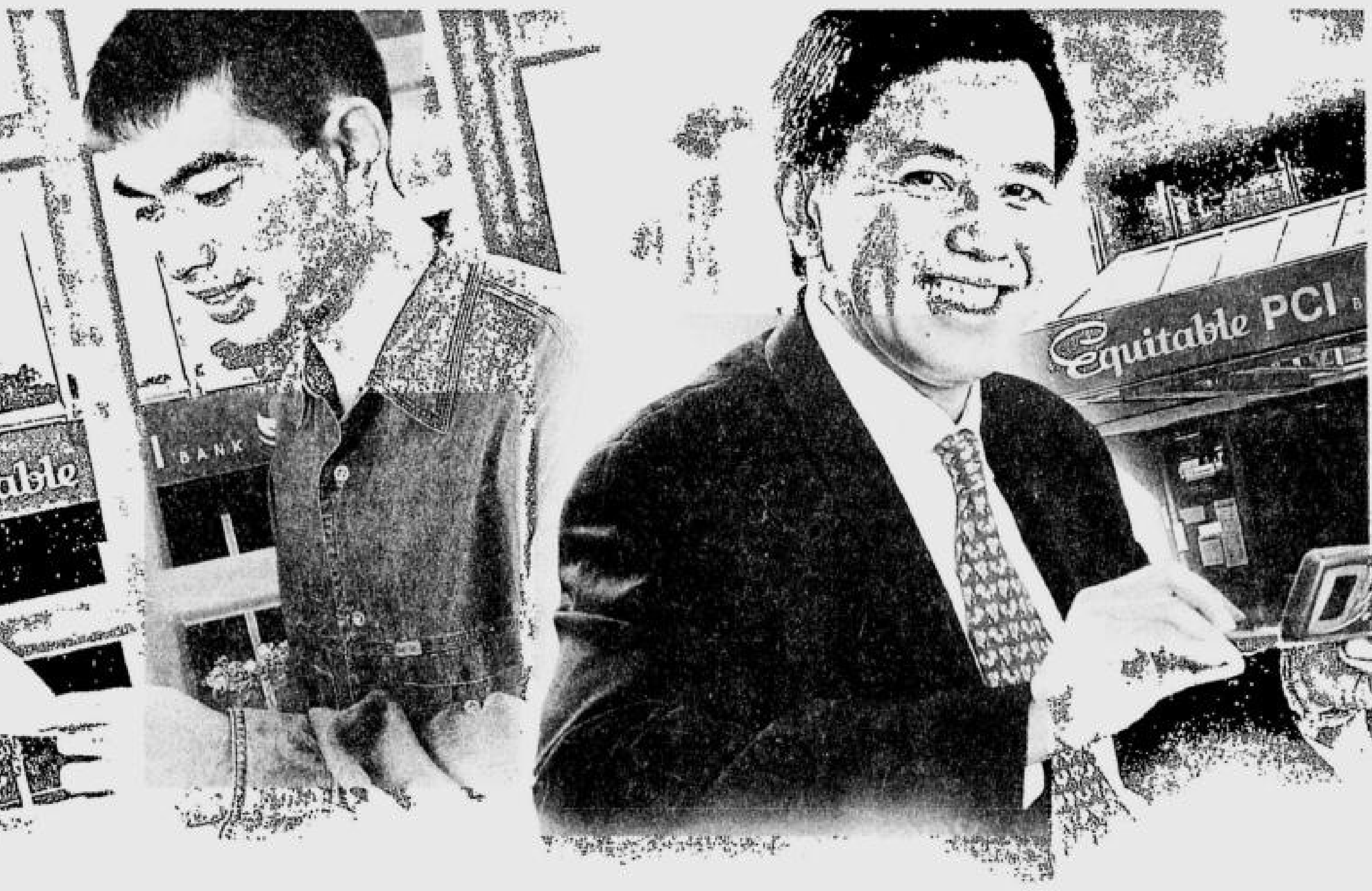

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(PDI-Jan 10, 17 & 24,2002)

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **GRAMERCY FORGE INTERNATIONAL, INC.** with address at Lamac, Lilo-an, Cebu for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as amended by Republic Act 7918 as New Export Producer of Furniture Made of Wood, Wrought Iron, Stone, etc. or in Combination Thereof at capacities of 11,520 Pieces Per Year and with proposed plant site in Lamac, Lilo-an, Cebu has been officially accepted on **January 8, 2002** and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing and under oath with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. CHITA O. ANGELES**
Director
Investment Assistance Department

(PDI- Jan. 10, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF BIDDING

The government thru the Department of Finance (DOF)/National Agriculture and Fishery Council (NAFC) has endorsed to NFA the monetization and disposition of the remaining 157,500 MT of imported yellow corn under the FY 2001 PL 480 Title 1 Program of the United States of America.

The corn shall be pre-sold thru Sale Thru Market Determined Pricing (SMDP).

All interested yellow corn users who intend to participate in the bidding should be guided by the following:

1. The volume shall be 157,500 MT yellow corn, disport Manila and Subic.
2. The quality specification is US Yellow corn No. 2 in bulk.
3. The indicative price is set at P7.30/kilo for the commodity. However, offerors shall inform the NFA the point/mode of withdrawal whether:
   a. Ex-FOT bulk
   b. Ex-FOT bagged
   c. F.O. silo
   d. FOW
4. A pre-bidding conference shall be conducted on January 14 and 21, 2002 and the bidding proper on January 16 and 23, 2002 at 2:00 PM at the Food Development Center (FDC) Lecture Room, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.
5. The bidding shall be open to all legitimate poultry and hog raisers/ feedmillers and other end-users who are registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) as corn users as of January 2002.
6. A bid bond equivalent to 5% of total auction offered amount in the form of either cash/manager's/cashier's check/Letter of Credit (L/C) payable to NFA shall be required from interested bidders. The L/C shall be irrevocable at sight and valid for thirty (30) days.
7. The bidding for the 157,500 MT is subject to the Terms and Conditions set forth by the NFA. All interested bidders are required to secure the Terms and Conditions from the NFA at its Marketing Operations Department, 5th floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City.
8. The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such offers which in its judgement are most reasonable and advantageous to the Government.

For further inquiries, contact NFA-DMO at telephone numbers 712-15-72; 712-15-64; 712-19-28.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY R. A. ABAD**
Administrator

(PDI - Jan. 9, 10 & 11, 2002)

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the following Official Receipts have been declared lost

SILICON VALLEY computer centers
OR# 77252, 85124

Please do not honor the above-mentioned Official Receipts when presented

---

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that branch office of

Angelex Allied Agency

with postal address at

**#817 San Miguel St.,
Mac Arthur Highway,
Calasiao, Pangasinan**

has ceased it's operation. All personnel of said branch are no longer authorized to transact any business for and in behalf of Angelex Allied Agency. Transaction with said branch and with said staff will not be honored by the main office.

Angelex Allied Agency
POEA LICENSED-020-LB-013100-NL
Rm. 115 Aurora Plaza Bldg. II, Padre Faura St.,
Ermita Manila
Tel. No. 4004645 • 5226170 Telefax: 338-2765
(main office)

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"Neither death nor life... neither the present or the future nor any powers will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
ROMANS 8:38

DR. JUSTINA MARGARITA MARTELINO JOVELLANOS, DVM, UP '97

November 30, 1971 - January 6, 2002

Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 30.

Her bereaved parents **DR. & MRS. MARIANO & PERNY JOVELLANOS**; brothers **NESTOR TORIBIO & LEONARD NICOMEDES**; **LOLA PERLA**; uncles and aunties; cousins **BAI-DA**; relatives, friends, church congregation, mourn her passing away but celebrate her eternal rest with our Lord.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Sto. Rosario Memorial Park, Tikling, Antipolo City, 1:00 p.m. on January 12, 2002 after the congregational service.

The MANAGEMENT and STAFF
of
PARIS-MANILA Technology Corporation
(PAMATEC)
announce with deep sorrow the demise of

Count Henri d' ABOVILLE

(February 4, 1911 - January 5, 2002)

the beloved father of
Hubert d' Aboville, Founder and President of PAMATEC.

His body lies in state at their ancestral home in Brittany, France.

Interment took place on Wednesday, January 9 following a Mass at 3:00 p.m. in Crach.

In Loving Memory
On the Sixth Death Anniversary

JUDGE ANGEL S. MALAYA

Died 10 January 1996

Masses will be offered on 10 January 2002 at the Peñafrancia Basilica Minore and National Shrine in Naga City and the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Cubao, Quezon City, among others.

His family and relatives requests the pious reader to remember him with prayers.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

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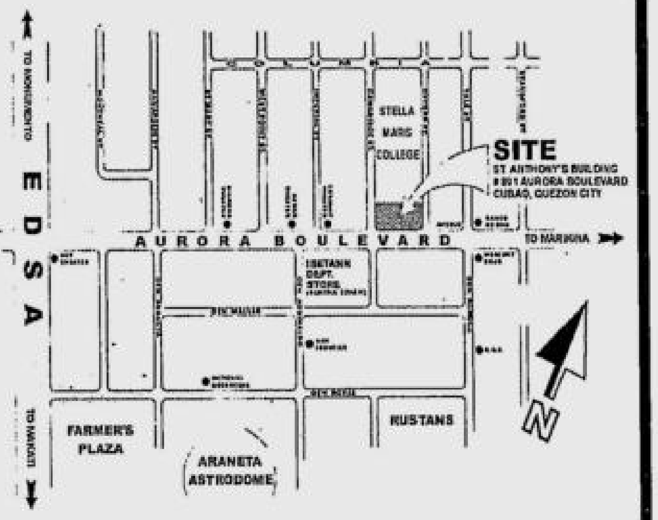

Our Dearly Beloved

VIRGILIO P. AVANCEÑA

of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 8, 2002 at the age of 74.

His loving wife **Josefina**; and only daughter **Oda**; together with sisters, brothers, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Charity Chapel, Don Bosco Parish, Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

LETICIA RODRIGO PAGUIA

Born on January 10, 1939

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 9, 2002.

Her loving husband **Jose**; children **Tinette**, **Jojo**, **Maritess**, **Dindo**, **Abet** and **Tiny**; children-in-law **Danilo**, **Marinet** and **Vanging**; grandchildren; mother **Consuelo**; sisters, brother and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at their family residence at 55 Abar 1st, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be announced later.

The U.P. TAU GAMMA PHI ALUMNI

Extend their condolences to the family
of

JOSE PEREZ QUIMPO
"Jojo"

who peacefully joined our Creator on January 7, 2002 at the age of 49.

His loving wife **Ma. Eloisa** (**Oyie**); children **Joel Matthew** and **Donna Marie**; mother **Mellita**; brother **Bambie** and family and sister **Honey** and family; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Memorial Chapels, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 12, 2002 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City immediately after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

APC Back-UPS receives Windows XP Logo

AMERICAN Power Conversion (APC) announced that it has been awarded the 'Designed for Windows XP' logo for its complete line of Back-UPS battery back-up/uninterruptible power supply (UPS) products.

Building on its effort to assist Microsoft in the development of the Windows XP operating system, APC has enhanced its comprehensive Windows XP solutions by obtaining the Designed for Windows XP logo for its Back-UPS hardware. By conforming APC's products to the strict standards of the Designed for Windows XP logo, XP customers can be assured that APC is fully compatible with the newest Windows platform from Microsoft.

"The Designed for Windows Logo Program is a great way for customers to identify those products optimized to work with Windows XP," said John Frederiksen, general manager of Windows marketing at Microsoft. "We are pleased that APC is building products to meet the standards of the Designed for Windows Logo program, ensuring customers a great experience when installing an APC Back-UPS system with Windows XP.''

The Designed for Windows XP Logo Program promotes quality product development practices that ensure a good user experience on Windows XP. The program brings hardware and software quality standards under a single logo, making it easier for customers to recognize products that are designed to deliver a great computing experience with the Windows XP operating system. As a recipient of the logo, APC's Designed for Windows XP products will be listed in Microsoft's Windows Catalog under the category "miscellaneous".

The Windows Catalog will provide customers with a comprehensive, easy-to-use list of products that work with Windows XP. Customers can access the Windows Catalog from the Windows XP Start menu, Windows XP Help and Support site, and the Microsoft Web site.

"By developing products that adhere to the Designed for Windows XP logo criteria, APC offers its customers a first-rate experience when running Windows XP. Our continued support of Microsoft's Designed for Windows program has been an essential part of our overall product development and marketing process for years," said Joe Loberti, general manager of APC's Consumer Networks Solutions group. "Our ongoing commitment to providing industry-leading power management solutions for the Windows platform is highlighted through receiving the Designed for Windows logo and our relationship with Microsoft in developing Windows XP's built-in serial UPS management support.''

For more information on APC's solutions for Windows XP and its complete line of award-winning products call 637-5457, or visit APC's website at www.apc.com.

MICROSOFT-RP AGREEMENTS

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Microsoft chair and chief software architect Bill Gates witness the signing of the first of three memoranda of understanding between the country and the leading software company. Key signatories of the first MOU are Vicky Garchitorena, Secretary of the Presidential Management Staff/ Office of the President and Richard Francis, Microsoft Philippines general manager. This particular MOU enlists Microsoft's assistance in the deployment and management of a knowledge-based system that will monitor the progress of the State of the Nation Address (Sona) projects. The MOU signing was conducted during the recently concluded Apec summit in China.

HP LASERJET 1200 RAFFLE WINNERS

Six out of 10 winners of the HP LaserJet 1200 series raffle promo received their prizes from HP Phils. market development manager for imaging and printing solutions Anabelle Bernice Co (fifth from left). Shown are Donna Simbajon (fourth from left), winner of the HP Pavilion, and winners of HP Jornadas (from left) Jeanette Retiro, Leilani Naval, Imelda Cruc Maghirang, Michaela C. Carillo and Masaki Enomoto.

COURTESY CALL

The board of directors of the Direct-Selling Association of the Philippines (DSAP) recently visited the Department of Trade and Industry for a courtesy call. Shown is DTI Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal (center) together with DSAP officers (from left) Ella Del Rosario, assistant secretary general; Fred Pizzaro, director; Louie Migne, secretary general and Bernie Mercado, DSAP director and Nu Skin Philippines' general manager. DSAP is the national trade association of the direct-selling industry of which Nu Skin is an active member. Nu Skin is a multilevel company engaged in the person-to-person distribution of premium quality personal care and nutritional products.

ARTISTS' HAVEN

Surreala Café general manager John Jolie Tan (seated, second from left) and prime artist Kinjo Estioko pose with body painting contestants during the three-day launching celebration of Surreala Café held at Mother Ignacia, Timog Avenue, Quezon City. The launching celebration showcased various art activities which include a nude sketching session, art work exhibit, henna tattooing, original song composition, poetry reading and live band performances, among others. Surreala Café specializes in Italian and international cuisine. The three-story restaurant showcases outstanding murals and art objects inspired by surrealism—an art form transpired by untamed dreams and imagination of people who think beyond the threshold of many. It is usually considered as a haven for yuppies, local visual artists, literati, computer techies and performing artists.

MANILA MIDTOWN'S FAMILIARIZATION TOUR

The Manila Midtown Hotel (MMH) hosted a familiarization tour for Utag travel agents from Sydney locally handled by the Rajah Tours Philippines Inc. Joining them are staff of MMH sales department Sol B. Dela Cruz, travel trade manager and Eriq D. Agaser, travel account manager.

CMP informal home loans exceed marks

INFORMAL settlers have availed themselves during the first 10 months of 2001 of some P241.8 million in loan assistance under the government's Community Mortgage Program (CMP) to finance their land tenure and housing security, exceeding the loan levels during the previous two years, according to the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. (NHMFC).

Lawyer Angelico T. Salud, NHMFC president, in a report to Housing Secretary Michael T. Defensor, concurrent chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, said that the loans granted as of October 2001 had exceeded by 21 percent and 18 percent the CMP loan levels in 2000 and 1999, respectively.

While the loan performance is lower that the annual average CMP loans of P246 million during the last 13 years of the urban poor home financing program, year-end figures are expected to reach the P300 million mark, based on the average monthly loans of over P24 million during the first 10 months, he informed.

Loan beneficiaries during the last 10-month period reached a total of 6,833 and are expected to match the annual average of 8,637 informal settler-families, Salud said.

He also informed that NHMFC is targeting 23,000 beneficiaries with a total of P1 billion in loans during the period July 2001 to June 2002, as the agency's contribution to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's commitment to provide 50,000 informal settlers with housing assistance.

He expressed confidence to meet this target within the remaining eight months should the agency receive the corresponding fund releases consisting of national government subsidies for the CMP.

The agency has started to implement policy and administrative changes, which he said will help in meeting these targets and boost housing acquisition by the informal housing beneficiaries.

Among these are the reduction by 59 percent (from 56 to 32), the number of required CMP loan documents; partial decentralization to NHMFC regional/zonal offices of CMP loan processing; increase to P100,000 the maximum individual CMP loan portion for lot and housing applications in Metro Manila or highly urbanized areas and up to P85,000 outside these areas; fast-tracking of the grant by BIR of the capital gains tax exemption for CMP-financed lands; and the easing of the titling requirements for said lands by the Land Registration Authority, Salud added.

RP reelected to IMO Council

THE PHILIPPINES was reelected for the third time as Council member to the International Maritime Organization at its assembly in London recently.

Represented by Philippine Ambassador to the United Kingdom Cesar Bautista, the country won sixth place in the 16-man Council category C after garnering 102 of 136 votes. There are three Council categories. Eight states providing international shipping services comprise category A, while category B is composed of eight others which have the largest interest in international seaborne trade. Category C consists of states which have special interests in maritime transport or navigation.

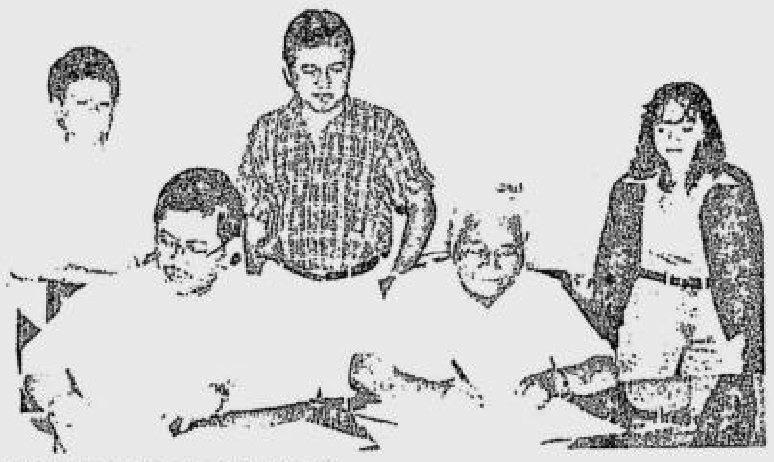
A top provider of seafarers and an active member of the 160-country IMO since 1964, the Philippines was first elected to the Council in 1997 and reelected in 1999. IMO develops international regulations to improve safety at sea and prevent pollution, and holds elections every two years.

The Council supervises the coordination of activities, drafting the work program and budget estimates, and appointing the organization's Secretary-General.

AYALA LIFE
ASSURANCE

AYALA LIFE ENDOWMENT PLANS LAUNCH

Ayala Life recently launched the Ayala Life 15 and 20-year Endowment Plans--plans with double financial protection and a guaranteed savings program. The endowment plans are part of Ayala Life's new lineup of consumer-focused products. Shown at the launch are the Ayala Life business leaders and partners with Ayala Life president Alfonso L. Salcedo, Jr. Ayala Life is the life insurance company and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank of the Philippine Islands.



HOUSING ALLOCATION

Lawyer Edgardo D. Pamintuan (left), general manager of the National Housing Authority (NHA) and Cavite Governor Ireneo S. Maliksi (right) sign a memorandum of agreement allocating 300 housing units in the Kasiglahan Village 5, General Trias, Cavite for homeless constituents of the province of Cavite. Kasiglahan Village is one of the several housing projects of the NHA recently completed in the provinces of Rizal and Cavite. Looking on are (standing, from left) architect Susan Nonato, deputy area management officer of NHA-Southern Luzon and Bicol Region Office; Danny Consumido, NHA PR consultant and Nerissa Garcia.

IIRA AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO

Philippine Vice President Teofisto Guingona was the guest of honor and keynote speaker during the International Industrial Relations Association's 4th Asian Regional Congress held recently at the Grand Ballroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City. Shown is Guingona welcomed by Dean Maragtas Amante and Dr. Jose Gatchalian.

SIEMENS

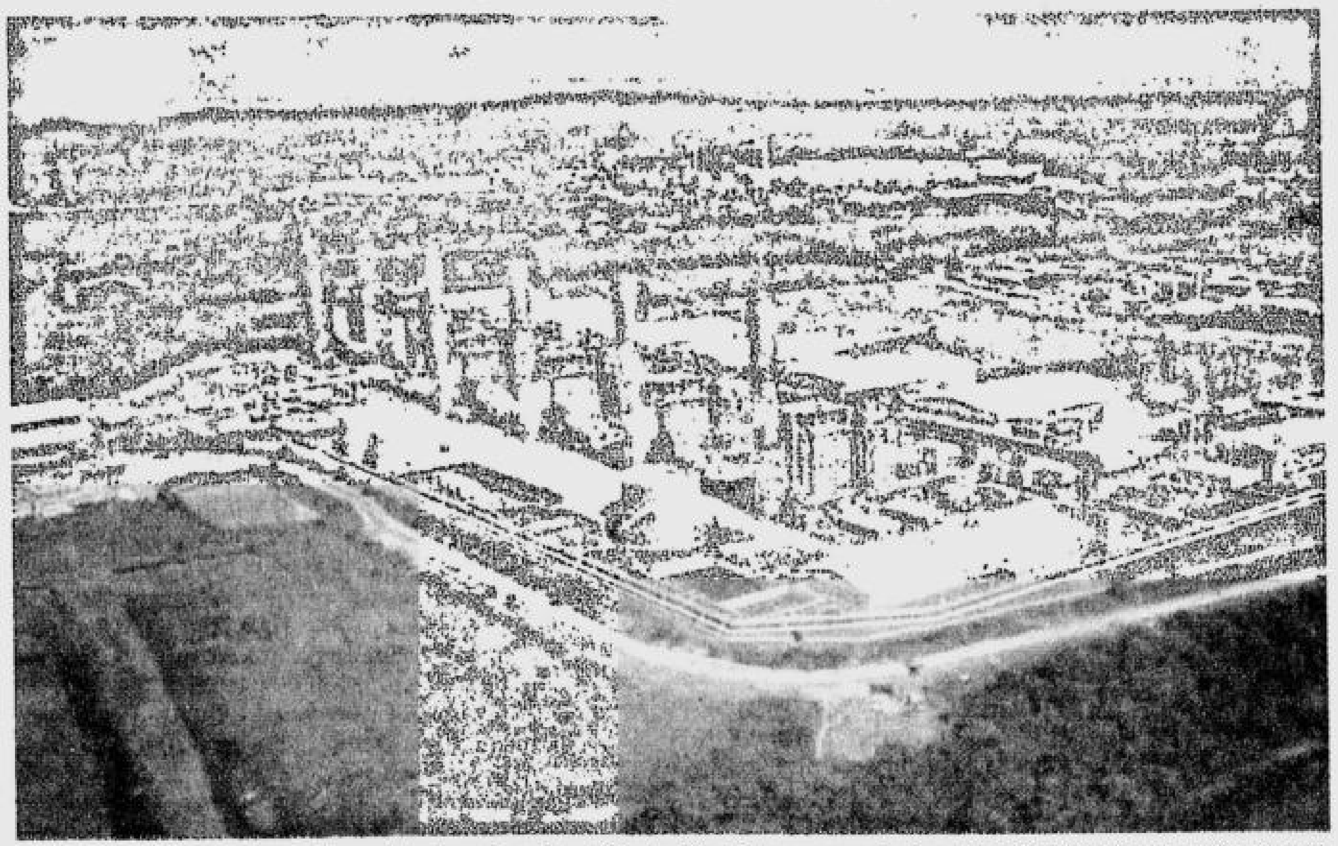
Siemens Power Operations, Inc.
Santa Rita Power Station Batangas

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES
REGISTERED TO ISO 9001:2000 - OCTOBER 1, 2001.

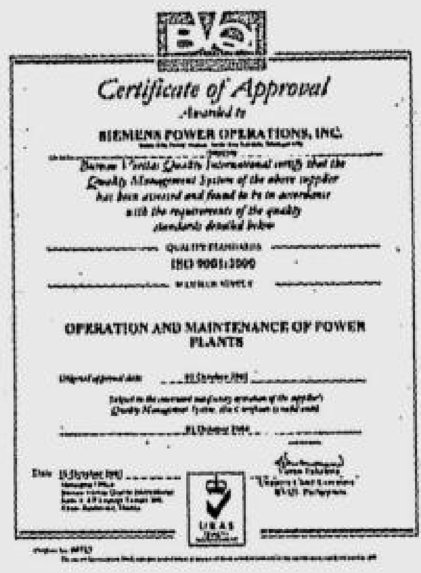
CONGRATULATIONS

FROM

SIEMENS INC. AND
FIRST GAS POWER CORP.



The six Siemens single shaft combined cycle units at Santa Rita Batangas producing total 1500 MW to the national grid.



BVQI

Certificate of Approval

Awarded to

SIEMENS POWER OPERATIONS, INC.

Bureau Veritas Quality International certify that the Quality Management System of the above supplier has been assessed and found to be in accordance with the requirements of the quality standards detailed below

QUALITY STANDARDS

ISO 9001:2000

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF POWER PLANTS

UKAS

BVQI

ISO 9001

UKAS
QUALITY MANAGEMENT

ISO 9001:2000
CERTIFICATION BY
BUREAU VERITAS
QUALITY
INTERNATIONAL

NAGEMENT SYSTEM REGISTERED ON
TIO TO THE SPO OR
Batang

Mr. Gerd Kirschen - EVP and Chief Executive Officer receives the registration certificate from Mr. Yasuo Takehisa - Country Chief Executive BVQI

MESSAGES

MR. G. KIRSCHEN

EVP and Chief Executive Officer
Siemens Power Operations, Inc.

It gives me great pleasure to announce SPO's recent registration to the prestigious standard. Our registration to ISO 9001 Standard on October 1, 2001 marks a significant milestone in the development and progress of our young company.

I would like to thank First Gas for encouraging and assisting us with our quality management system and our program for registration. Our quality policy is customer-oriented and so are our quality objectives. We will assess these continually and hopefully stay on the right course.

In particular, I would like to thank the entire organization of Siemens Power Operations for all the hard work, team spirit and positive support of our ISO 9001 registration program.

From the earliest days of the Santa Rita project, before any of our one hundred over procedures were developed, through the training, implementation, internal audits and corrective action undertaken, I have been witness to the improvement in the proficiency levels of our management team and in the competency, skills and confidence of our engineers, technicians and our administrative support personnel. One of our main quality objectives is to maintain this continual improvement.

MR. H. WECKHERLIN

President and CEO
Siemens Inc.

It gives me great pleasure to personally congratulate Siemens Power Operations for achieving the registration of its Quality Management System to the ISO 9001 Standard on October 1, 2001.

I cannot think of a better mechanism to contribute to the stability of any organization than the provision of sound management and a solid quality management system. To me, a well-established and well-run quality management system means good quality services and these in return all add to our quality of life.

Siemens considers itself amongst the world's leaders in quality management of power plant operations and maintenance and the Philippines is no longer an exception to this claim. However, what is more important to Siemens is our focus on customers' needs and requirements. We will continually measure and evaluate our performance in meeting these requirements towards improving our services to even higher levels.

I wish SPO continued success in this endeavor so that as the quality of management in the Philippines is seen to compare well with international standards, we can feel that we have indeed contributed

Siemens now applies its Operations and Maintenance (O&M) philosophy of highest operating revenue to its largest O&M project to date: the 1000-MW Santa Rita power plant and the 500-MW San Lorenzo power plant in the Philippines.

In December 1996, First Gas Power Corporation (FGPC) entered into a turnkey EPC contract with Siemens to construct a 1000 MW combined cycle power plant. The four unit plant is located in Santa Rita, a suburb of Batangas City located 100 km south of Manila.

Simultaneously, Siemens Power Operations, Inc. (SPOI), a 100% subsidiary of Siemens AG, was awarded the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) agreement. SPOI will operate and maintain the plant for at least six years or 75,000 equivalent hours (EOH), whatever comes last. The term started in mid-August 2000 with plant takeover.

In April 1999, SPOI signed another O&M contract with the same customer to operate its new plant, currently under commissioning adjacent to Santa Rita, the 500 MW San Lorenzo combined cycle power station.

Plant Mobilization Phase

The mobilization phase began in April 1998 when the first group of Siemens employees was assigned to the Philippines to set up the company and start recruitment of staff. Around 2000 applicants for technical positions responded to SPOI's advertising campaign. After intensive tests and selection, contracts were finally awarded to 65 engineers and technicians. Starting dates were staggered, with the general target to have the people trained when the commissioning started. Further staff was hired as the need arose.

Classroom training on site conducted by the Siemens Power Generation training department started in mid-August 1998 and was concluded after eight months. During the period between the end of training in April 1999 and plant takeover in August 2000, the staff was trained on the job.

The technical staff participated in plant erection and commissioning under the supervision of Siemens specialists. Simultaneously, the business administration section had to be built up and trained to a high standard since SPOI acts as an independent company under the Philippine law.

Personnel: Know-How Transfer to Local Staff

To cope with the challenge of building up an O&M company capable of running a plant of the size of Santa Rita, experienced expatriate and local staff were necessary to achieve the goals. A total of approximately 100 staff was ready to take on responsibility at the time of plant takeover.

The expatriates possess considerable experience in the management, operation and maintenance of power plants, and were selected not only based on their professional qualification but also on their cultural sensitivity.

SPOI is committed to developing and promoting local staff through systematic knowledge infusion and technology transfer. A key task of the expatriates is to transfer their expertise to the locally recruited staff that can then take over associated tasks later on. Only a small number of expatriates will stay until the end of the O&M agreement.

Operating Philosophy: Highest Revenues

The operating philosophy of SPOI is to provide FGPC with the highest operating revenue at the lowest operating cost by utilizing detailed and proven operating procedures and efficient IT tools.

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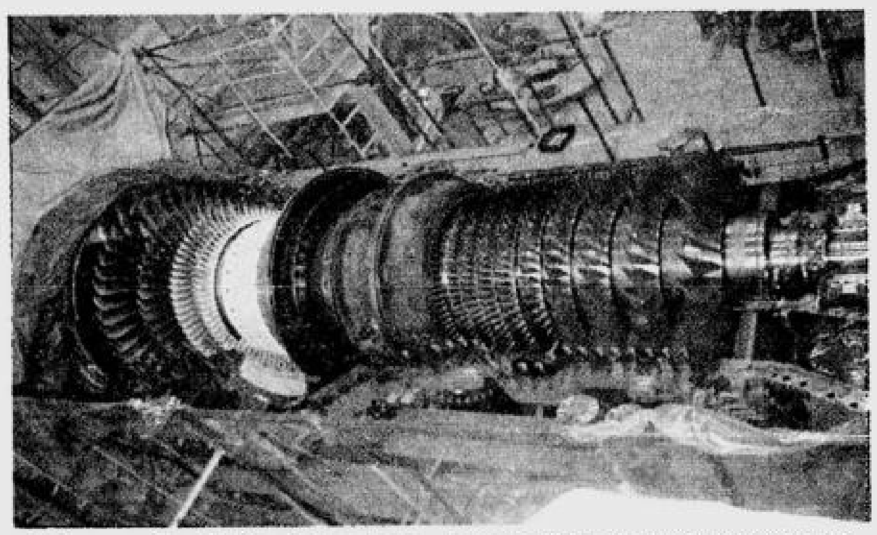

A Siemens Gas Turbine Rotor being removed for scheduled maintenance.

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Maintenance Strategy: Highest Availability

Siemens has extensive experience in scheduled, preventive and predictive maintenance techniques aimed at avoiding forced outages and achieving highest availability.

SPOI uses advanced concepts including condition monitoring and at a later stage will introduce reliability-centered maintenance. Scheduled plant maintenance is driven by the gas turbine scheduled outages with inspection intervals based on accumulated equivalent operating hours.

SIEMENS
ISO 9001:2000 REGISTRATION CEREMONY
SPO QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REGISTERED ON OCTOBER 1, 2001
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SPO ORGANIZATION

SPO Board of Directors: Mr. Dieter Fluck, Mr. Hans Weckherlin, Mr. Gernot Ziegeldecker, Mr. Gerd Kirschen and Mr. Ulrich Rehmund pose with their Quality Manager - Mr. Barry Popple and BVQI Country Chief Executive - Mr. Yasuo Takehisa.

MANPROM REACHES OUT

Manprom Inc., a full-service advertising agency and an affiliate of Batey Ads of Singapore, recently donated to the Don Bosco Pugad, a home for street children of St. John Bosco Parish in Makati. The drop-in center prepares the street children for long-term rehabilitation and immediate reconstruction of value systems damaged by street culture. The donation was made in lieu of the Christmas gifts the agency gives to its valued clients annually. Together with the resident-kids at the back are (from left) Fr. Bong Javines, SDB, Lot Arguelles, Manprom account manager; Nimfa Arugay, HRD manager; Fr. Gerry Battad, SDB, parish priest of Don Bosco; Suzie C. Maturan, Manprom chief operating officer, who also represented the agency's president Dolores F. C. Cang, Ramon M. Bermeo, vice president for accounts and Fr. Tony Caspellan, SDB.

Wendy's Filipino breakfast

GOOD mornings really start at Wendy's. Treat yourself with its all-new mouth-watering breakfast menu items. A generous serving of slices of flavorful and hearty 'tapa' or two golden brown tasty links of 'longganisa'. Both served with hot, garlic flavored fried rice and soft scrambled egg. Complete with your choice of coffee, hot tea or medium soft drink. Available for only P59 and for a limited time only. So what are you waiting for, catch early mornings at Wendy's outlets now.

Shell launches new Rimula Diesel engine oils

PILIPINAS Shell Petroleum Corp. recently launched the new Shell Rimula family of heavy-duty diesel engine oils at the Centennial Hall of the Manila Hotel to address the needs of a wide range of diesel engines.

The Shell Rimula family such as Rimula Super, premium protection Rimula X, complemented by Rimula D and Rimula J oils promise to deliver value-added performance.

The program was opened by a lively production number rendered by the 'Sexbomb dances', followed by a song number by Geneva Cruz. Versatile performer and comedian Arnel Ignacio then joined her in introducing the new Rimula diesel oils through an informative audio-visual presentation, highlighting the oils' advantages and superior characteristics developed for heavy-duty application.

The entertainers then introduced Pilipinas Shell commercial vice president Romy de Guzman, who thanked the quests for their overwhelming support for Shell's new products.

"We are proud to finally introduce to the public the new Shell Rimula, a product that will truly meet the needs of diesel oil users," De Guzman stated. The launch was attended by Shell dealers, customers, distributors and other business partners.

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BMAP SWING FOR HOPE

The Bank Marketing Association of the Philippines (BMAP) recently organized a golf tournament dubbed BMAP Swing for Hope at the Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club. The tournament drew 79 avid golf players from BMAP member banks, bank clients, sponsors and other guests. BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura was represented by Andres V. Rustia, assistant to the governor (third from left). Also shown during the ceremonial tee-off are (from left): Jun Balbido, Philippine Veterans Bank president; golf committee chair Jimmy Yu, SVP Banco de Oro; lawyer Rey Maclang, president, Allied Bank; Rene Peronilla, president, Traders Royal Bank; BMAP president Gerry Diaz, SVP-Banco de Oro; Allan Tumbaga, BMAP vice president, RCBC and Maureen Abelardo, special projects director, Skoal Communications. Seated are the kids from the Bantay Bata Foundation, beneficiary of the golf tournament.

LOREN AT ROTARY LUNCH

Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda-Leviste receives a plaque of appreciation for serving as guest speaker at the joint luncheon meeting hosted by the Rotary Clubs of Cebu and Metro Cebu in tribute of the local media for Press Freedom Week. Legarda spoke on the growing threat of organized crime in the country and fielded questions during a stimulating open forum on the current issues besetting the country. Handing Legarda her plaque are RC Metro Cebu president Mars J. Pastor (left) and RC Cebu president and former Cebu City Vice Mayor Ronald Duterte.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be accepting sealed offers for the Sale thru Market Determined Pricing 2,650 MT (53,000 BAGS) more or less Calrose Rice Variety, Grade No. 1, at the indicative price of:

a. Ex-Warehouse Php P25/kg or P1,250/bag

on **January 16** and **24, 2002** at 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM at the Food Development Center (FDC) Lecture Room, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

A pre-bidding conference shall be held on **January 14** and **22, 2002** at 10:00 AM at the NFA Boardroom. In the pre-auction, interested bidders shall bring the following:

a. Original and xerox copy of NFA license (retailing, wholesaling).
b. Duly notarized authorization from the owner, partner, chairman or president that he or she is authorized to represent the business entity in the pre-auction, auction proper and all activities thereto.

All interested bidders shall submit a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in the form of cash, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check from any reputable banks in Metro Manila.

Interested bidders may secure the terms and conditions starting **January 11, 2002** at DMO OCD, 5th Floor from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For any inquiries, please call tel. nos. 712-1572 and 712-1708.

Bidding documents will be available on **January 14, 2002** to qualified bidders/offerors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00. In case of bidding failure, a pre-bidding/re-bidding shall be conducted at 10:00 AM at Food Development Center (FDC) Lecture Room, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila on **January 22, 2002** and **January 24, 2002**, respectively.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality thereof, and to accept only such bids that are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY R. A. ABAD**
Administrator

(PDI – Jan. 9, 10 & 11, 2002)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be accepting sealed offers for the Sale thru Market Determined Pricing 31,782 MT (635,640 BAGS) more or less US Long Grain Rice Variety, Grade No. 2, at the following indicative prices:

a. Ex-Vessel - Php P16.50/kg or P825.00/bag
b. Ex-FOT - Php P17.00/kg or P850.00/bag
c. Ex-Warehouse - Php P18.25/kg or P912.50/bag

on **January 24** and **31, 2002** at 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM at the Food Development Center (FDC) Lecture Room, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

A pre-bidding conference shall be held on **January 22** and **29, 2002** at 2:00 PM at the NFA Boardroom. In the pre-auction, interested bidders shall bring the following:

a. Original and xerox copy of NFA license (retailing, wholesaling).
b. Duly notarized authorization from the owner, partner, chairman or president that he or she is authorized to represent the business entity in the pre-auction, auction proper and all activities thereto.

All interested bidders shall submit a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in the form of cash, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check from any reputable banks in Metro Manila.

Interested bidders may secure the terms and conditions starting **January 21, 2002** at DMO OCD, 5th Floor from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For any inquiries, please call tel. nos. 712-1572 and 712-1708.

Bidding documents will be available on **January 22, 2002** to qualified bidders/offerors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00. In case of bidding failure, a pre-bidding/re-bidding shall be conducted at 2:00 PM at Food Development Center (FDC) Lecture Room, FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila on **January 29, 2002** and **January 31, 2002**, respectively.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality thereof, and to accept only such bids that are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY R. A. ABAD**
Administrator

(PDI – Jan. 9, 10 & 11, 2002)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites all interested parties to submit sealed bids for Janitorial Maintenance and Sanitation Services at Matimyas and Tengsico Buildings, Motorpool, Hangar and Food Development Center needing around thirty eight (38) janitors. The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

January 11-15, 2002	- Issuance of pre-qualification requirements
January 22, 2002	- Deadline of submission of pre-qualification requirements
January 25 & 28, 2002	- Issuance of bid documents
January 30, 2002 (10:00 AM)	- Pre-bidding conference
February 7, 2002	
(9:15 - 10:00 AM)	- Submission of bid proposals
(10:15 AM)	Opening of bid proposals

Pre-qualification forms and requirements can be secured from and submitted to PBAC Secretariat, ODAFA, 7th Floor, Matimyas Building, 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City. For any inquiries, please call tel. no. 712-0453. Bidding documents may likewise be secured from PBAC Secretariat and the same shall be issued to pre-qualified bidders upon payment of P2,000.00 non-refundable fee. In case of bidding failure, a pre-bidding/re-bidding shall be conducted at the same time at NFA Boardroom on February 21 and February 28, 2002, respectively.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY.

(Sgd.) **MICHAEL ANGELO G. PADERANGA**
Deputy Administrator & Chairman, PBAC

(PDI – Jan. 10 & 11, 2002)

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c/o Ms. Marilou Ty
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M. Santos Komiks Magazines & Newspaper Dealer
Door C, MB Building
Fuentes Drive, Roxas City
Tel. Nos. (036) 621-5586/522-6925
Tacloban City
Mr. Neil Montejo
Montejo's Newspaper Supply
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MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

USED VEHICLES FOR AUCTION

'Cheap, but are these safe?' assemblers ask

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

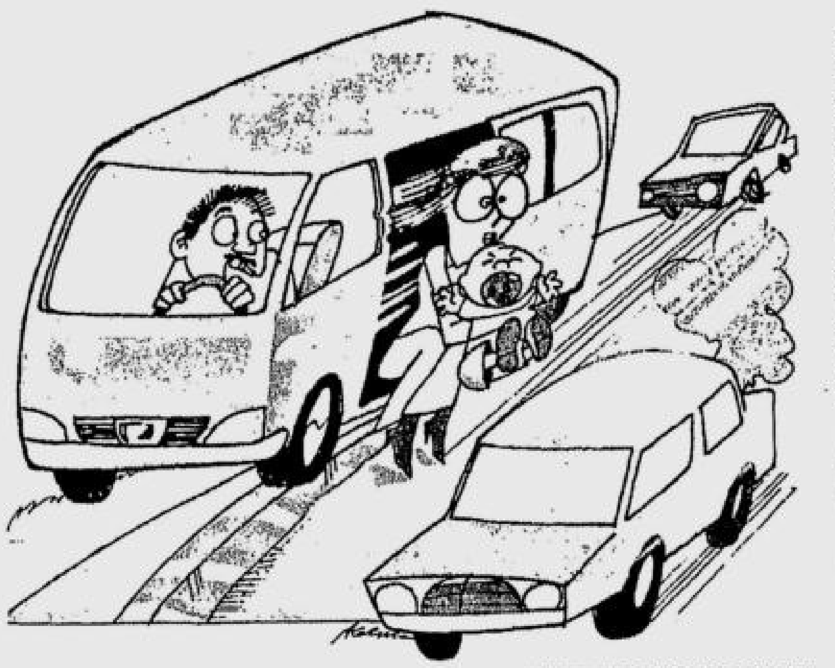
ILLUSTRATION:ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

THE SINGLE sliding door of a van is at its left. This would be perfectly all right for a right-hand-drive road system, where the door slides open to the curb. In a left-hand-drive system that the Philippines has, however, the door opens to the roadside where all the other vehicles pass.

A truck that was originally right-hand drive but was repositioned as a left-hand drive now runs in Metro Manila. Most repositioned trucks and buses have welded steel brake pipes to a copper pipe and brazened this with brass. Welding dissimilar metals cause galvanic corrosion. As a result, the air compressor of these trucks burst and the brakes fail.

The van in the first scenario is a Mitsubishi Delica—one of many repositioned right-hand-drive vans imported from Japan. These are allegedly being auctioned off in Malinta, Valenzuela or Subic. The public bidding of these vans and other used vehicles such as Toyota Lite Ace, Town Ace and Mitsubishi Space Gear is set to commence again in February and March. Prices of these used vehicles could range from P150,000 to P300,000. Other vehicles such as dump/cargo trucks, ambulances, used buses, wrecker and tow truck are also set to be auctioned off.

Complaints

The Philippine Automotive Federation Inc. (Pafi) aired complaints against auctioneers of these used vehicles recently. Pafi said that if the government could not be convinced to look into the auctioneers' compliance on tax requirements or its serious impact on the local industry, then it should at least look into the auctioneers' compliance on safety regulations.

The issue of safety included repositioned vehicles, particularly trucks, which could still have the original headlight beam pattern of a right-hand drive. Several trucks spotted plying the Philippine highways last year still had left headlight beams sloped upward, blinding oncoming motorists while the right beam still sloped downward, preventing the driver from seeing pedestrians on the sidewalk. The sweep of the arm of the wipers, meanwhile, waves away from the driver, decreasing his field of vision during rainy conditions.

Pafi also said that many import regulations do not indicate the year model, type and make of a vehicle and that the Customs admitted using just the declared value of importers as basis of tax assessment.

"Aside from its negative impact on the viability of the local automotive industry, its compliance with various government regulations related to environment, safety, importation and taxation is of utmost concern to us and we presume to the government as well," said Pafi president Vicente T. Mills Jr. to Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II in a letter, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

Pafi also raised the issue about auctioneers offering for bid and sale used passenger cars. The Philippines has a memorandum order that allows only the importation of new passenger cars, stressed Pafi.

Advice

The organization also advised the government to look into most of the used imported vehicles that are more than five years old and the purported owners of these vehicles who also set the prices and consign these to the auctioneers.

Pafi said that a law on imported vehicles sold to nonlocators and brought out (of the Subic Freeport zone) for use outside of the zone shall be subject to importation rules of the government. These include payment of duties and taxes, import authority from the Bureau of Import Services, and certification of compliance with the emission and safety regulations such as the Clean Air Act, Seatbelt Law and the Right Hand Drive Law.

The Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Import Services' Elias Deveza, who heads the transfer of used trucks and buses, said in an interview that Republic Act 8506 indicates that importing right-hand-drive vehicles are not allowed. The trucks should be converted in the country of origin.

"Passenger vans, 10-seater and above and diesel-fed, are liberalized and are allowed entry in any of our ports," he said. Deveza added that gasoline-fed passenger vans are not liberalized and are prohibited from entry. The Customs knows this, he said.

Trucks, six tons and above, and buses, 12 tons and above, are already liberalized, he added. Cargo and dump trucks, 4.5 to 6 tons, and buses, six to 12 tons, are still regulated. These vehicles need a BIS clearance, he said. "This is what we look after."

Trade liberalization

Subic auctioneer JMVC told the INQUIRER two years ago that the trade liberalization has resulted in the influx of imported used vehicles and that the auto manufacturers should accept this fact. Auctioneers in Subic claimed that their activities have generated nearly P197 million worth of revenues for the Bureau of Customs in 22 months (from January 1999 to October 2000 alone).

In previous talks with the auctioneers, they revealed that they were responding to the needs of the middle- to lower-income Filipinos who could not afford brand-new vehicles but had as much right to own as those who could afford cars.

Two years ago, Rep. Eduardo Gullas warned the government that its revenues from auctioneers would mean nothing if the brisk trade of imported vehicles would lead to labor retrenchments among local car manufacturers.

The auctioneers said that all vehicles and heavy equipment sold in the Subic auctions have complied fully with their tax and duty payments as well as government safety standards. It was also confirmed that year that roughly 2,000 used vehicles were sold per auction day.

Korean cars getting better

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

AT THE 35TH Tokyo Motor Show last October, I skipped the exhibit booths of the South Korean car manufacturers Hyundai, Kia and Daewoo. That was a big mistake, for it turns out that in 2001, the sales of Hyundai and Kia motor vehicles hit record highs because South Korea is building better cars each year.

An article last month by Micheline Maynard of New York Times Service reveals that as early as autumn, Hyundai, Kia and Daewoo passed a milestone by crossing the half-million mark in annual sales in the United States since January. If this pace continued so that the Korean carmakers collectively sold more than 600,000 vehicles by year-end, it represented a 33 percent gain or about 4 percent of the American market, four times the South Korean share three years ago.

Last week, Agence France Presse reported from Seoul that Hyundai Motor Co. and its affiliate Kia Motors Corp. sold a record 2.6 million vehicles in 2001, a 5.7 percent increase over the previous year's sales. Hyundai sold 1.6 million vehicles, up 4.3 percent from a year earlier, while Kia sales reached 990,804, a rise of 7.5 percent. Although the sales of ailing Daewoo fell 40.7 percent last year to 448,613 units largely because of uncertainty about its future (General Motors is finalizing a deal to take control), it sold a total of 33,365 vehicles in December, up 13.6 percent from November.

With the low prices of their cars, the Korean automakers got off to a fast start in the US in 1986 but their poorly made products, such as the Hyundai Excel, almost put them out of business. To ease consumers' apprehensions about reliability, Hyundai North America in the late 1990s came up with "America's Best Warranty, the Hyundai Advantage"—a 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty with five years of free 24-hour roadside assistance. Hyundai's "best in the business" extended warranty was soon copied by Chrysler and Ford for some cars competing with South Korean products.

At the same time, Hyundai developed attractive new models such as the highly successful Santa Fe Sport utility vehicle and the upscale XG family sedan and marketed them at fantastically affordable prices. The 2002 models of the Santa Fe (only US$17,000 plus) and Hyundai Elantra GT ($13,999) hatchback have been getting rave reviews in US car 'zines for their style, performance, materials and quality of construction. Leather seats, dual front and side airbags, air con, tilt steering, cruise control, a CD player, 4-wheel disc brakes, 5-spoke 15-inch alloy wheels, Michelin tires and power windows, doors and locks are standard equipment in the 2.0-liter DOHC, 140 bhp Elantra GT. The redesigned 2002 Hyundai Sonata GLS, a 181 hp, DOHC, V6 midsize sedan, looks like a Jaguar sedan up front and sells for only $17,499 with dual front and side airbags, 4-speed automatic with Shiftronic transmission, AM/FM cassette/CD player, cruise control, power windows, locks, heated mirrors and air con as standard equipment. Small wonder that, as Ms Maynard notes, despite the economic slump and even without interest-free financing, Hyundai's 573 dealers have trouble keeping cars in stock in US showrooms.

Kia, Hyundai's sibling—Hyundai owns 51 percent of Kia—is targeting younger buyers in the US by keeping prices lower than, say, the Hyundai XG 350, which maxes out at $27,000 for a full load of features. Kia is positioning itself in the US car market as spunkier and more attuned to fun than Hyundai, which is perceived as conservative and traditional. The problem of keeping their brands distinct may crop up, however, since Kia and Hyundai have opened a joint design center in California. The Optima, for example, is Kia's version of the Hyundai Sonata sedan.

Over here, Kia Motors Corp. has a bargain price image because of its low-cost Pride and Rio subcompacts and Besta and Pregio vans. The Sportage cute ute, which has remained unchanged since its first appearance in the market many years ago and the more recent intro of the sleek Carnival minivan have done little to change Kia's budget car image. The time is ripe for Kia's big brother, Hyundai to move Korean cars upmarket and revitalize the car wars by bringing in the exciting 2002 models of the Elantra GT, Sonata GLS, Santa Fe SUV, top-of-the-line XG 350 and, next year, the all-new 2003 Tiburon sports coupé.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Everything coming your way? You're in the wrong lane.

* * *

E-mail comments to aida_sevilla @pacific.net.ph

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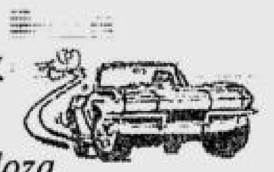
FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza



THE MOVE to raise fees at both the North and South Diversion Roads and the Skyway is almost indefensible. Why it was done boggles the mind, indeed.

For one, it came like a bolt of lightning, thus catching many by surprise. For another, both toll roads are in terrible shape. Thank God, the Skyway has maintained its quality.

Common sense tells us you don't easily part with your money for something that utterly lacks in quality. The swiftness with which it was imposed stunned the public, thus the strong resistance to it.

The Supreme Court has stepped into the case.

Hopefully, order will soon be restored at the country's main express(?)ways.

But wait. Hasn't President Macapagal-Arroyo suspended the increase in fees at both toll roads?

* * *

In a recent study on girl and boy drivers in the United States, 16-year-old girls are becoming almost as bad as 16-year-old boys. Teenage girls are driving more and the youngest drivers are involved in an increasing number of accidents.

One reason teenage Americans drive cars is that cars come cheap in America. Over there, almost every family owns a car.

Over here, the car is still considered a luxury. Only the rich can provide their children with cars. Thus, it is common to see scions of wealthy families getting involved in vehicular accidents. The most recent one involved Vandolph, son of ace comedian Dolphy and actress Alma Moreno.

Perhaps, it's about time we copied America's vehicle insurance laws. That the more you incur accidents, the higher your insurance premiums should be.

And, yes, why don't we allow the buying of insurance policy for a minimum of three years?

Saves us time, you know.

* * *

Congratulations to Toyota for emerging No. 1 again in the overall performance of sales for 2001.

Honda topped the passenger car category while Mitsubishi was the runaway winner in the commercial bracket.

Toyota swept into the overall lead with the strong showing of its Altis, the best-selling sedan. Also fortifying Toyota's market leadership was Revo's solid performance in the year past.

And, yes, speaking of Toyota, welcome to Tabata-san, who will replace Fukuda-san as president of Toyota Motor Philippines. The turnover ceremonies will be held on Jan. 21.

Hey, Ariel, is Vince Socco coming back soon? Perhaps, Danny I. can give me the lowdown on this?

Just asking, fellas.

* * *

Danzel, Min and TinTin are Arnel's Angels at Honda. Gosh, how lucky can Arnel D get. Her angels are not only hardworking. They really deliver the goods when they need to.

I remember Arnel telling me one time: "I have always preferred women over men to compose my staff. Working with women makes me feel comfortable. For me, it has always been easy to deal with them."

May Arnel Doria's tribe increase.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Not bad to buy a secondhand car. Just make sure you are buying it either from a relative or a dear friend.

Prestone raffle promo deadline

PRESTONE, the No. 1 brand in the brake fluid industry, announced that the deadline for the submission of entries for its promo "Basta Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners" is on Jan. 15.

The five winners for each raffle will be picked from the following regions: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Winners will be notified about the details where they can claim their prizes.

The grand raffle will be held on Jan. 31 at the Cipi Bicutan Plant.

You can still join the promo by simply buying Prestone Brake Fluid and Prestone II Longlife Coolant.

What to expect from automakers

BY RAYMOND B. TRIBDINO
Contributor

"STILL to hit rock bottom" is how an industry analyst depicts the 2002 manufacturing sector outlook. No brighter is the picture in the automotive assembly scene as carmakers are struggling to keep afloat. New car sales are expected to take another dive in 2002. While auction houses are cashing in on the situation, bringing in lot after lot of reconditioned Korean vans and Japanese surplus vehicles.

The economic downturn is the main reason plans to introduce new car models have been temporarily shelved, but this doesn't mean we won't see any fresh vehicles in the showrooms. Here is the INQUIRER's quick rundown of truths, rumors and lies for 2002.

Audi

Truth: Audis are great German cars ruined by lack of after-sales service worthy of the brand. **Rumor:** Audi dealer may lend members of the local motoring press Audi TT Roadsters for their driving pleasure. **Lie:** Audi will provide several TT Roadsters for the motoring press to test-drive.

BMW

Truth: The German carmaker is the most aggressive among the European marques in the country. Faced with a deluge of Bimmers, smuggled or otherwise from the gray market and the auction houses, BMW's campaign to improve the luxury market is succeeding as competing brands are trying to keep up with its assertive advertising campaigns. **Rumor:** BMW's hot X5 SUV will be available by February 2002. **Lie:** BMW to pull out of F1 racing.

Chevrolet

Truth: General Motors' partner Suzuki is helping the company develop a small car designed to be Asia's passenger car of choice. **Rumor:** A sleeker, more normal version of the quirky-looking Baleno-derived Chevrolet Cassia will be introduced mid-2002. **Lie:** A sleeker, normal-looking version of the Cassia.

Chrysler

Truth: DaimlerChrysler is looking at strengthening its position in the Asian region, especially in China, which it plans to develop as a future key market. **Rumor:** Chrysler will break Ford's domination of the full-size, large displacement pickup market with its Dakota. **Lie:** Chrysler sells 2,000 Dakotas in one month.

Ford

Truth: Ford will continue with its upgrading program for the current vehicle lineup. The F-150 was improved and introduced in August 2001 as the Ford Supercrew. Expect major changes with the Expedition as the series has been revamped in the United States. Ford will also start exporting the Lynx as Lasers to nearby markets under the AICO scheme. **Rumor:** An automatic transmission Ranger is said to be in the works, similar to the "Splash," a pickup very popular in Thailand. Analysts see an all-new Ford model in 2002, and this could very well be the mid-size SUV, the Ford Escape. **Lie:** Outgoing marketing boss Dave Gutman is going to body double for Bill Gates in a movie about computers and world domination and a certain Ford executive is going to sit in for Juan Pablo Montoya at Williams-BMW.

Honda

Truth: Honda Cars took the No. 1 slot in the passenger car market again for 2001, outselling the Corolla and Sentra by a wide margin. Also a new CR-V may soon be introduced, though as of press time, plans were shelved pending the "improvement of the current economic situation," says a reliable source at HCPI. **Rumor:** The only other Japanese carmaker without an AUV in the Philippines will bring in its own version of the popular vehicle based on the CR-V chassis. Said vehicle will be the first front-wheel-drive AUV available. This "technically possible" Honda AUV is already said to be in existence. **Lie:** Honda's new AUV will be called the CR-AV, pronounced as "crab."

Hyundai

Truth: Hyundai has set its sights on a major comeback to the Philippines after a botched first try with former local partner Francisco Motors. At present, the company is building a showroom and administrative office on Pasong Tamo, where the old Mazda dealership was. **Rumor:** Hyundai will bring in affordable cars creating its own niche of loyal customers in the same way Samsung ate into Sony's market in the field of electronic appliances. **Lie:** Hyundai cars will be assembled by Sarao Motors.

Mazda

Truth: Good cars orphaned by corporate upheavals. **Rumor:** Ford dealers ready to adopt orphaned 323s and 626s. **Lie:** Grille swaps with Ford Lynx possible.

Mitsubishi

Truth: Mitsubishi continues to lead the commercial vehicle segment with its truck and AUV line. The Adventure carries on with its onslaught against the Revo and is tailing it very closely. The Lancer will not see a complete model change this year, unless plans shift midstream. Well-placed sources say that the new Lancer, built on the rigid Cedia platform may not find its way to the Philippines in 2002. **Rumor:** A batch of left-hand drive Evolution VIIs is coming in to be sold at P2.8 million per piece. **Lie:** No one owns an Evolution VII in the Philippines yet.

Mercedes-Benz

Truth: Despite the economic downturn, Mercedes-Benzes of any kind sell well and inventory seems to move quite quickly. **Rumor:** The Vito may soon see a camper version. **Lie:** Mercedes hearses are cheaper than station wagons.

Nissan (NMPI)

Truth: The labor woes of passenger carmaker Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. seem over for the meantime. No new Sentra is expected officially. **Rumor:** A sporty but cosmetic revamp on the Sentra line may be in the works and a new Cefiro (which looks very much like a C-class Benz) might be introduced middle of the year. A replacement for the Vanette is also in the pipeline but according to a mole at the NMPI, the release of this van is hampered by the uncontrolled sale of cheap Korean vans. **Lie:** A left-hand drive version of the Skyline GT will be made available locally.

Nissan (UMC)

Truth: Successfully marrying brutally good looks and torquey performance, the Nissan Frontier still tops the pickup sales charts. Universal Motors Corp., which makes Nissan's light commercial vehicles, is not about to change the all-conquering formula of the Frontier. It recently came out with a limited production "pearl" version of the pickup. **Rumor:** A new, sleeker, better-equipped Urvan/Escapade may find its way to the showrooms in the latter part of 2002. **Lie:** The futuristic X-Terra and X-Trail will replace the Frontier and Terrano.

Opel

Truth: Opels are affordable European cars, but a great deal needs to be done about after sales, according to many Opel owners. **Rumor:** A Formula-Opel campaign will start at the Batangas Racing Circuit in 2002. **Lie:** Michael Schumacher was hired to train the drivers.

Proton

Truth: Proton was a great car sold by a mismanaged company. There are still a great many of these Malaysian-made sedans. These cars trudge along, constantly providing a great ride, as well as parts and servicing problems to the thousands who own these Mitsubishi-based sedans. **Rumor:** The only remaining brand-new Proton, the stretched limousine at the old Proton showroom is being sold at a basement price. **Lie:** That Wira limousine-conversion was done in the Malaguena jeepney plant, known for its stretched 24-seater jeepneys.

Toyota

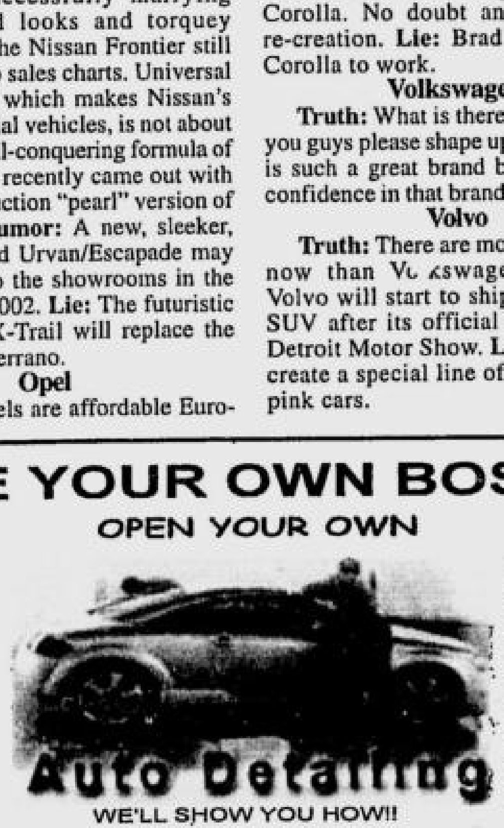
Truth: Nothing beats a Toyota for reliability. Period. As of this writing, there is not word about a new Toyota vehicle model. The SR-5 pickup was launched earlier than expected. **Rumors:** A new Camry? A Revo upgrade? There seem to be a lot of talk about a sports-package Corolla. No doubt another TOM's re-creation. **Lie:** Brad Pitt drives a Corolla to work.

Volkswagen

Truth: What is there to say but can you guys please shape up? Volkswagen is such a great brand but there is no confidence in that brand here.

Volvo

Truth: There are more Volvos sold now than Volkswagens. **Rumor:** Volvo will start to ship in the XC90 SUV after its official launch at the Detroit Motor Show. **Lie:** Volvo will create a special line of Barbie-series pink cars.


BE YOUR OWN BOSS!
OPEN YOUR OWN
BRUSHES
DRESSINGS
COMPOUNDS
SHAMPOO
FRAGRANCE
BUFFING PAD
FOAM PAD
DEGREASERS
WASH MITTS
GLASS CLNR
CLEANERS
WAX
CAR SOAP
CLAY
SEALANT
PROTECTANT
Auto Detailing
WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW!!
automagic inc.
1000 arnaiz ave. ste 402 la'O Center makati (across new world hotel)
894-1370

The family next door

(From page B12)

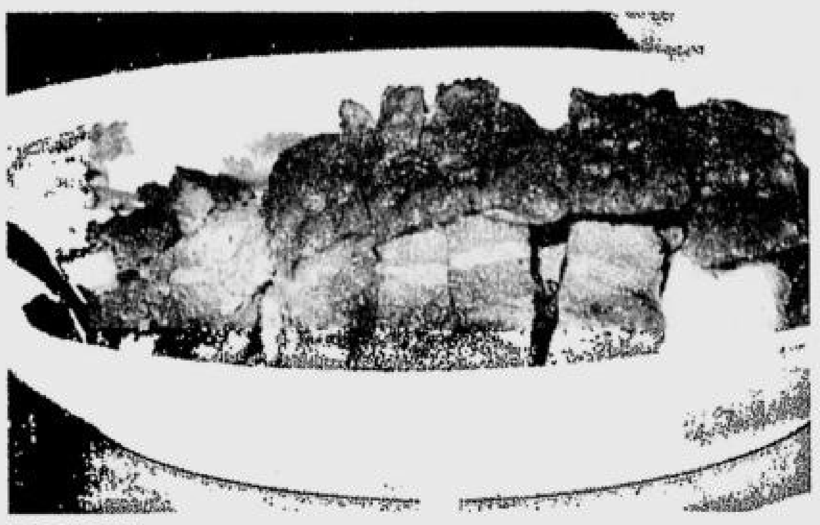
and tendon; mushrooms and wonton; barbecued pork *asado*; *lapu-lapu* with mushrooms: shredded chicken with shiitake and wontons; curry beef, tendon and shiitake; roast duck; and tiger prawns. Making up these combinations must have been like playing chess and choosing gambits, or perhaps like designing a patchwork quilt.

Chow mien or dry noodles are available, too, and so are special fried rice dishes: with salted fish, with minced beef and curry, with Chinese *bagoong* (anchovies) and *lechon* Macau, and with a sauce. That was what Ambassador Benny Tan, Emma, their daughter-in-law and grandchildren were having with joy.

There are the comforting congees (*lugaw*), of course, this time in fire pots, with mixed roast meat and century egg; with pork balls and Szechuan vegetable; with white chicken and three kinds of mushrooms; with sliced beef and clams; with *lapu-lapu* fillet and pot herbs.

A dish that made little Gabby Tan exclaim, "This is good!" was the Peking-style fried chicken with very crisp skin. Our table returned again and again with sighs and exclamations to the steamed snow fish with black bean sauce (plunge the whole fish into hot water to seal it, says Gabriel, then steam with finely sliced leeks and black beans).

The drinks made a buzz from table to table. The old, unbeatable fresh lemonade has since been joined by the Next Door Apple Iced Tea with fresh apple; the Next Door Lemon Iced Tea and the Tropical Passion, made of passion fruit from Cotabato farms.

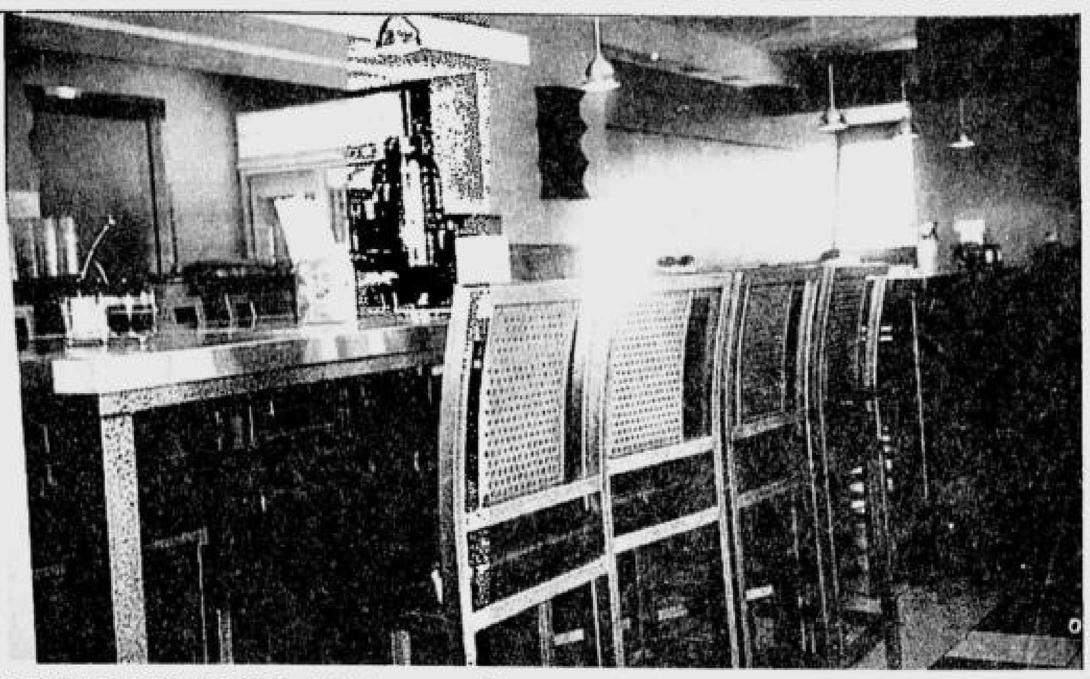

LECHON Macau

ESTELA Soon

Unlike many Chinese restaurants, where the imagination stops short of a couple of desserts, here there are such enticements as Lychee Panna Cotta, Durian Banana Split, ice creams (*durian*, green tea, *macapuno*, Choko Barako and strawberry), Lauriat Halo-Halo and Cloud Mushrooms with Lotus Nuts.

Tradition and care

The evolution of this unusual restaurant started with David and Estela Soon, parents. David used to have a restaurant in Binondo, which I remember for having a fabulous crab dish (he promises to resurrect it soon). Estela is an accomplished home cook,' devoted to traditional dishes like fresh Amoy *lumpia* and *kikiam* (Fujian Beancurd Roll). These, she taught her sons Rafael and Gabriel, were products of tradition and care, and the test of a good restaurant—the *lumpia* wrapped just so (fat and sassy and arm-sized), the *kikiam* filled only with pork, and fried crisp.


BEYOND NEXT DOOR—interiors so unlike a noodle house

Paeng and Gabby Soon are chefs, both of whom tried working in Vancouver for a while, both eventually coming home to open North Park Noodles—on Wilson Street, in Banawe, in Makati, in Alabang, with the guidance and help of their parents. Now that the smoothly running operation occupies them and 300 employees and a central kitchen, they have opened Next Door, based on old favorites and on new dishes: tradition and innovation. The first floor with 80 seats will soon be expanded with a second-floor dim sum bar. It is open daily from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; 5 p.m.-2 a.m.

All are hands-on, deeply into day-to-day operations. Father David goes daily to Divisoria, because he knows where and how to buy fresh produce for all the restaurants, especially vegetables (Taiwan *pechay*, *kangkong*, Chinese broccoli, Australian broccoli flowers, leeks, scallions, mushrooms). Mother Estela comes around to supervise—and even to clean and clear tables when the restaurants are full and the staff all occupied.

Next Door is indeed next door to North Park Makati, almost just around the corner. What makes it so good? The marvelous Soon family Next Door.

TASTEMAKERS

THE ONGPAUCO clan

Still home to authentic Filipino food

BARRIO Fiesta is the home of authentic Filipino fiesta fare. But few people know that the restaurant actually began in a real home: the Caloocan residence of Barrio Fiesta founder Sixta Evangelista, more popularly known as Mama Chit. A mother of eight, Mama Chit put up Barrio Fiesta in 1958 to earn extra income for her large family. The Barrio Fiesta rose, quite literally, in Mama Chit's own backyard.

"Cooking was Mama Chit's passion, and she was known to her family and friends as a wonderful cook who had her own style of cooking. People were always telling her that she should put up a small eatery in her backyard. That's how Barrio Fiesta was borne, says Mama Chit's granddaughter Happy Ongpauco-Rivera.

Happy, who is in charge of public relations, belongs to the third generation Ongpaucos who have taken over the operations of Barrio Fiesta. Helping her out are her cousins Tyrone Ongpauco (marketing director) and Mark Tamayo (operations and finance).

Today, Barrio Fiesta offers the same home-cooked specialties that Mama Chit made famous, such as *kare-kare* and *crispy pata*. These dishes still attract people to Barrio Fiesta's doors.

Barrio Fiesta has grown tremendously since 1958. Happy and her cousins have grand dreams for what began as a small backyard enterprise. "Our dream is to be the largest Filipino food chain in the world," says Tyrone. "Our mission is to satisfy our customers by serving them consistent, high-quality, affordable dishes using the same efficient and friendly service that people have known for years. We want to make authentic Filipino food known throughout the world."

CHIT Evangelista, commonly known as Mama Chit, during her younger years

In line with this goal, expect a few changes to take place. Very soon, Barrio Fiesta will be modernizing its look and improving its products and services to keep in step with the times. "We have come up with the Barrio Fiesta call center," says Mark. "Simply dial 705-7777 and authentic Filipino food will be delivered right at your doorstep."

But the one thing that the cousins will not change is the authentic, home-cooked Filipino fiesta fare that has made Barrio Fiesta famous throughout the years.

New year, new haunt for coffee lovers

FIGARO-HARRISON Plaza, a franchised outlet owned and operated by AVM Business Specialists, was blessed and inaugurated recently, with Lani Atienza-Beltran, Gen. Renato S. de Villa and the Francisco family grand matriarch Patsy de Santos-Francisco as guests of honor. Rev. Fr. Sanny de Claro officiated the blessing.

Antonio V. Martel Jr., proprietor of AVM Business Specialists and president of Harrison Plaza and himself a coffee lover and coffee shop habitué, welcomed the guests and treated them to a *merienda cena*.

Martel's wife Belen Lovina Ticzon-Martel, children Irene M. Francisco, Tonette Puyat Martel, Roby Puyat Martel and Antonia Ticzon Martel had bought the franchise to operate Figaro in Harrison Plaza as his birthday and Father's Day gift.

Figaro-Harrison Plaza serves hot and cold drinks, sandwiches and pastries, pasta, meat pies, among others. It is located at the main entrance of Harrison Plaza between Greenwich and Magic Pot.

Among those present during the inauguration were Manila Vice Mayor and Ms Danny Lacuna, Manila Bulletin publisher Nap Rama, Belco Marketing's Benny and Ophie Clemente, Ina Lovina Ticzon, Juliet Lovina Tic[illegible] Portia T. Santos, Isabel Ramos, Je[illegible] Chua, Tessie Maronilla, the US Embassy's Dot Sanders and wife Norma and daughter Kathy, Figaro's Reena Francisco [illegible] Glenda Irma Lovina and mom Ding [illegible] Ticzon, Harrison Plaza's Cesar Oligario, Ernie Ortiz, Danny Bonifacio, Offie Pacheco, Norma Cruz, designer and columnist Rikki Jimenez, Nene Leonor, Thelma Gana, Commodore Buenaventura, Myrna Dela Cruz, Bombit and Sharon Dela Peña, Tess Baniqued, Figaro-Harrison Plaza managing director Madeline G. Domingo, Romy Sevilla, Mutya Mercado, Greg Romero, Melissa Martel with children Paolo, Nikki and Anton.

PRESENT during the ribbon-cutting ceremony were Irene M. Francisco, Belen Lovina Ticzon-Martel, Ret. General Renato de Villa, Patsy de Santos-Francisco, Lani Atienza-Beltran and daughters and Antonio V. Martel Jr.

RELAUNCHED recently with a lot of pizzazz was La Taverna Ristorante Italiano, which is located at 41 Polaris St., Bel-Air Makati. The event was graced by world-class Italian artists: violinist Alberto de Meis, soprano Mika Mori Palmieri and Paolo Zanetti, La Taverna's artistic director. In photo are owner Marco Roberto Ascione with special guests former First Lady Imelda Marcos, Gov. Chavit Singson, Claudio Menesimi, Nuccio Saverio and Francesco Patron. La Taverna is open from Mondays to Sundays. Call 895-1590 or 890-9648.

Cookbook uncovers what you can do with soy sauce

"Creative Cooking with Kikkoman," a cookbook that showcases award-winning recipes in a visually exciting format, is now available at Powerbooks and National Bookstore.

The cookbook is a collection of recipes that won in a cooking competition sponsored by Kikkoman. The contest was open to all amateur cooks and culinary enthusiasts who responded overwhelmingly with highly imaginative recipes. The country's culinary experts helped choose the winning entries for the three categories, namely: Nouvelle Filipino Cuisine, International Cuisine and Desserts Categories.

A highly creative pool of talents was assembled to design and produce the book. Over 65 recipes were prepared. Laid out and photographed on location. The exceptional printing quality gave life to each creation.

Among the unique and innovative recipes is the Kangkong Ki-ni-kkoman, a grand prizewinner of the Nouvelle Filipino Cuisine category. The dish creatively elevates the lowly *kangkong* to a higher level—*kangkong* stalks are carefully stuffed with a pork mixture, sautéed in garlic and *aligui ng alimango* with Kikkoman Soy Sauce and Teriyaki Marinade, bunched together with spring onions on a spread of *kangkong* kernets.

The winner for the International Cuisine Category is St. Dominic's Sistine Rolls, rolled porkloin stuffed with cream cheese and seaweed strips, young corn and water chestnuts and brushed with cranberry sauce and Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade, fried to a crisp.

The category that still puzzles many is the Dessert Category. Yes, Kikkoman works great with desserts. The winning entry, called Banwich in Kikkolemon Sauce, is a banana sandwich—sliced banana filled with chocolate flan, coated with Kikkolemon sauce, spread over crushed graham crackers, garnished with stemmed cherry.

More exciting dishes are found in this cookbook that offer a whole new gastronomic experience, flavorful tastes and unique possibilities.

"Creative Cooking with Kikkoman" is published by Anvil Publishing.

Eating out in Alabang is fun

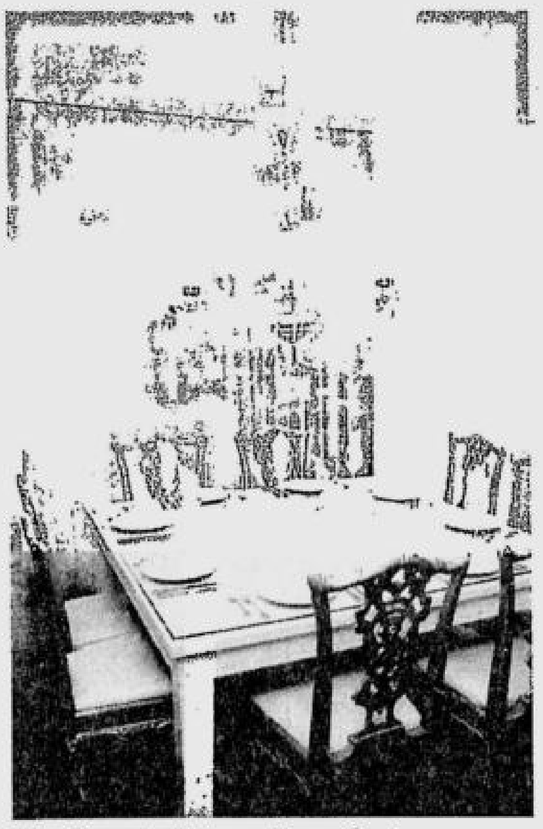
AS eating out is one of the most favored activities of Filipino families, Alabang Town Center packs itself with dining places that cater to the varying tastes of mallgoers. To date, Alabang Town Center houses about 80 dining outlets and here are some of its best bets.

Go down the red cobblestoned Corte de las Palmas and you'll be greeted with the aroma of coffee from Starbucks and Cinnzeo. Turn a little bit to the Promenade and there's Delifrance, Dulcinea and Almon Marina. Get to the second floor and discover fun places like TGIFriday's and California Pizza Kitchen. Fresh air breezes through chi chi places like Cibo, Café Breton and Tequilla Joe's. Then there are the old reliables—Saisaki, Dads, Gerry's Grill and Via Mare.

Everything is quite new at the North Park Noodle Restaurant, which is open until 2 a.m. to make it accessible to moviegoers. A little over three years ago, Café Breton started a crêpe craving among the yuppies. Today, the inviting aroma of crêpe and coffee waft through the second floor of the mall's Corte de las Palmas where Café Breton is. A hit among mallers is La Pinay, a concoction made of asparagus, salmon and capers for filling.

If you know Via Mare, the one in Alabang Town Center will entirely floor you. Yes, the foodfare is the same good 'ol Via Mare reliables—fresh oysters, *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* and *pancit luglog*—but the interiors of the Alabang branch, done mostly in white and silver, takes the cake.

With its fascinating look, people are beginning to re-discover Via Mare at Alabang Town Center for functions such as weddings, baptisms and other big occasions.


VIA Mare at Alabang Town Center surprises with eclectic and interesting interiors.

CAFE Breton's owners, Mariela Luna and Tony Canclo

Greetings from the world of the uncool

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

THEY say that the highest concentration of Rolls-Royces in the world is in Hong Kong, and I've no doubt this is true: in a city of label-whores and conspicuous consumption, where the roads are clogged with lorries and public transportation is cheap and efficient, this car, with its infamous tendency to "fail to proceed" (thus requiring the services of a specially licensed mechanic), is a testament to the triumph of imagination over reality, of vanity over practicality, and a demonstration of the power and symbolism that a brand-name can hold.

There are two sorts of brand-name sluts in the world: the traditionalists and the avant-garde. The traditionalists have an easier time in general, because these are names we've heard throughout our lives, and resonate with connotations of luxury not just in London or Paris, but in Dubai and Singapore as well; these names have been immortalized in books and movies; they are mantras of ambition and landmarks of success and having arrived. The Rolls-Royce; the Ritz; Dom Perignon; Johnny Walker Blue Label; Louis Vuitton; Hermes; Gucci; Godiva chocolates; Petrossian caviar; Maxim's; La Tour d'Argent; Dunhill; Cartier; Rolex; Patek Philippe. It's not a coincidence that many of the goods made by these companies are sold at airport duty-free boutiques; and much revenue is generated by selling to people who have an inclination toward "champagne tastes" but don't have much money, overpriced accessories such as ties, cufflinks, ashtrays, key chains and the like, so that one can revel in, say, the Hermes mystique without having to buy a calfskin coat.

So because the ascendants, pretenders and the aspiring can easily latch on to these talismans, the aristocracy of style hurriedly moved off, in either of two directions: into even further traditionalism or into the world of the avant-garde. Those inclined toward the former will call these well-known institutions "vulgar" (which hews to the etymology of the word, which originally meant "popular" and was used to differentiate the form of Latin spoken by the general populace), and will turn instead to those names that must be pronounced with your nose twitching: the Connaught; Le Bristol; John Lobb; Odiot; Charvet; Porthault; Lesage; Gieves and Hawkes; L'Ambroisie; Vacherin Constantin. Most of these firms are housed on original premises, refuse to give in to modernities such as air-conditioning; and are manned by very crusty old men who look as though they might have a seizure while writing out your receipt; one is often tempted to begin a conversation bemoaning the loss of India.

On the other hand, those who prefer not to feel as though they are extras in a Merchant-Ivory film have followed the lead of gay men into the frontier of the cutting-edge. As a matter of fact, whether you are a man or a woman, having a gay male friend is very useful for those who believe that style lies in this direction. The main problem with this method of distinguishing oneself from the "merely" rich is that the cutting-edge is constantly changing; but at the same time, this is the whole point of it. The journal of record for this world could be said to be Wallpaper; but by the time it reaches that publication's oversized pages, there's a large possibility the trend will have shifted. Recent names that have passed through the firmament of cutting-edge taste: the Hempel, some Ian Shrager hotels, Costes, Harvey Nichols, La Maison Rose, Claude Challe and (a particular favorite of mine) Colette in Paris. The last-named is one of those white-painted emporiums in Paris where the staff is wearing Prada, and is so resolutely hip that it carries obscurity to the point of bewilderment; it sells CDs no one has heard of, magazines that have no text but lots of bizarre photos and, of course, clothes and shoes that seem to have been designed for six-legged anorexics.

Crucial role

You'll notice I have not included any restaurants in the latter list, and that is because restaurants, as well as bars, play a crucial role for the purveyors of style. On the international circuit, the names and addresses of these places are passed around like Enigma encryption machines: at dinner-parties, over the phone and at these places themselves. Listen closely to the gay man dressed in a somewhat eccentric fashion who has just returned from some exotic destination, via Paris or New York; take down the "oh, so charming, just a little hard to get to" tiny restaurant he is raving about, as well as the bar where he met up with so-and-so ("You remember him, of course?"), who used to work with Roberto Cavalli or was a junior manager at Christie's. It won't be long before that little restaurant sprouts a six-month waiting list, the bar in question becomes highly exclusive and produces a CD mixed by its resident DJ, and the clothes he is wearing soon appear in fashion editorials.

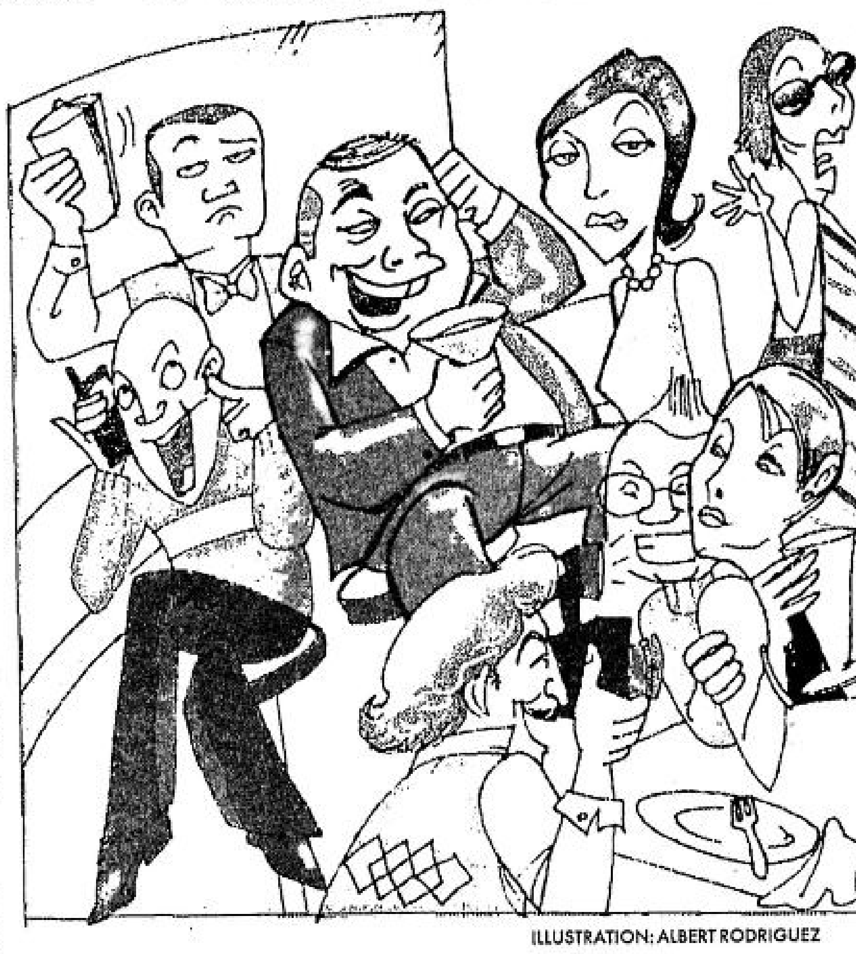


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

We have modernity and postmodernity (the endless quest for something new and different) to thank for this; and the whole idea of being "cool," a concept which, of course, is constantly changing as well. This is why we have magazines that give us lists of "what's in" and "what's out" (always culminating, with tiresome predictability, that what's-in-what's-out lists are "out"). The other result, of course, is that our tastes become influenced by these admonitions: we find ourselves dutifully trooping to a bar, looking around and telling ourselves: "Okay, this is what's in now." Ditto for people who force themselves to like certain albums or even a new subgenre ("a blend of trance, hip-hop, jazz and chill-out beat, with a hint of jungle and funk"). And most importantly, a lot of meals in obscure locations that are stunningly, mind-blowingly mediocre.

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E-mail the author at Clinton@i-manila.com.ph

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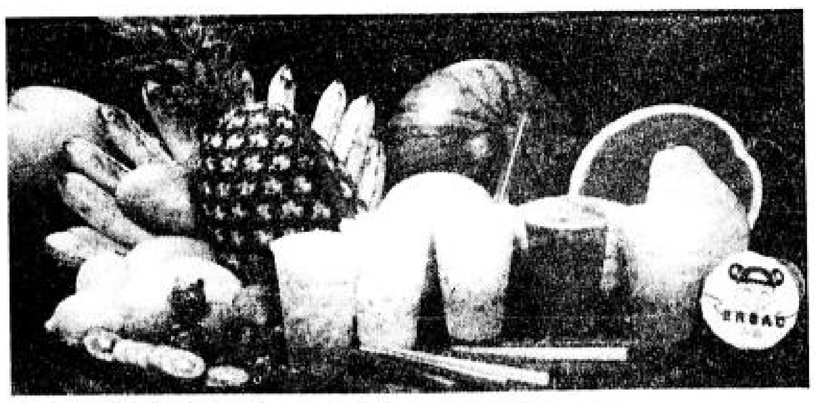

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Greetings from the world of the uncool

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

THEY say that the highest concentration of Rolls-Royces in the world is in Hong Kong, and I've no doubt this is true: in a city of label-whores and conspicuous consumption, where the roads are clogged with lorries and public transportation is cheap and efficient, this car, with its infamous tendency to "fail to proceed" (thus requiring the services of a specially licensed mechanic), is a testament to the triumph of imagination over reality, of vanity over practicality, and a demonstration of the power and symbolism that a brand-name can hold.

There are two sorts of brand-name sluts in the world: the traditionalists and the avant-garde. The traditionalists have an easier time in general, because these are names we've heard throughout our lives, and resonate with connotations of luxury not just in London or Paris, but in Dubai and Singapore as well; these names have been immortalized in books and movies; they are mantras of ambition and landmarks of success and having arrived. The Rolls-Royce; the Ritz; Dom Perignon; Johnny Walker Blue Label; Louis Vuitton; Hermes; Gucci; Godiva chocolates; Petrossian caviar; Maxim's; La Tour d'Argent; Dunhill; Cartier; Rolex; Patek Philippe. It's not a coincidence that many of the goods made by these companies are sold at airport duty-free boutiques; and much revenue is generated by selling to people who have an inclination toward "champagne tastes" but don't have much money, overpriced accessories such as ties, cufflinks, ashtrays, key chains and the like, so that one can revel in, say, the Hermes mystique without having to buy a calfskin coat.

So because the ascendants, pretenders and the aspiring can easily latch on to these talismans, the aristocracy of style hurriedly moved off, in either of two directions: into even further traditionalism or into the world of the avant-garde. Those inclined toward the former will call these well-known institutions "vulgar" (which hews to the etymology of the word, which originally meant "popular" and was used to differentiate the form of Latin spoken by the general populace), and will turn instead to those names that must be pronounced with your nose twitching: the Connaught; Le Bristol; John Lobb; Odiot; Charvet; Porthault; Lesage; Gieves and Hawkes; L'Ambroisie; Vacherin Constantin. Most of these firms are housed on original premises, refuse to give in to modernities such as air-conditioning; and are manned by very crusty old men who look as though they might have a seizure while writing out your receipt; one is often tempted to begin a conversation bemoaning the loss of India.

On the other hand, those who prefer not to feel as though they are extras in a Merchant-Ivory film have followed the lead of gay men into the frontier of the cutting-edge. As a matter of fact, whether you are a man or a woman, having a gay male friend is very useful for those who believe that style lies in this direction. The main problem with this method of distinguishing oneself from the "merely" rich is that the cutting-edge is constantly changing; but at the same time, this is the whole point of it. The journal of record for this world could be said to be Wallpaper; but by the time it reaches that publication's oversized pages, there's a large possibility the trend will have shifted. Recent names that have passed through the firmament of cutting-edge taste: the Hempel, some Ian Shrager hotels, Costes, Harvey Nichols, La Maison Rose, Claude Challe and (a particular favorite of mine) Colette in Paris. The last-named is one of those white-painted emporiums in Paris where the staff is wearing Prada, and is so resolutely hip that it carries obscurity to the point of bewilderment; it sells CDs no one has heard of, magazines that have no text but lots of bizarre photos and, of course, clothes and shoes that seem to have been designed for six-legged anorexics.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Crucial role

You'll notice I have not included any restaurants in the latter list, and that is because restaurants, as well as bars, play a crucial role for the purveyors of style. On the international circuit, the names and addresses of these places are passed around like Enigma encryption machines: at dinner-parties, over the phone and at these places themselves. Listen closely to the gay man dressed in a somewhat eccentric fashion who has just returned from some exotic destination, via Paris or New York; take down the "oh, so charming, just a little hard to get to" tiny restaurant he is raving about, as well as the bar where he met up with so-and-so ("You remember him, of course?"), who used to work with Roberto Cavalli or was a junior manager at Christie's. It won't be long before that little restaurant sprouts a six-month waiting list, the bar in question becomes highly exclusive and produces a CD mixed by its resident DJ, and the clothes he is wearing soon appear in fashion editorials.

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Good vs bad crowd

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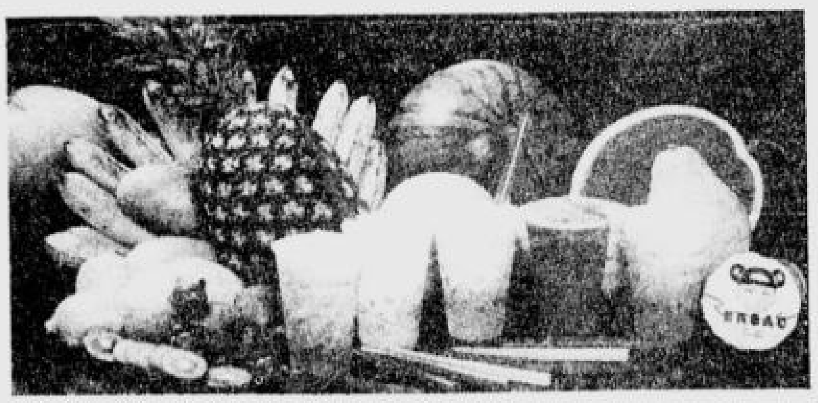

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SWEET and Sour Pork

The family next door

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

IT is unusual, in fact almost unbelievable: a restaurant seating just 80, with gray and black wrought-iron chairs, chrome-trimmed tables, and copper and wood accents with a clean, minimalist look—and excellent Chinese food. Quite a contrast indeed to the old, beloved *panciteria* look, or even to its brethren, the North Park noodle houses.

Called Next Door, this restaurant is diagonally across the street from North Park Makati, at 7876 Makati Ave. (tels. 897-1992. 899-1893), and opened softly in December 2001, with plans to go full blast late this month—a turn-of-the-century place indeed.

The menu makes for interesting reading, because it contains some of the old North Park favorites, dishes their customers ask for by name and from memory, for example Pinsec Frito, Peking- style Fried Chicken and Yang Chow Fried Rice, which have become veritable comfort food.

New dishes it has in great number, for example Hainan Chicken—not the three-dish Singaporean Hainanese Chicken Rice (soup, rice, chicken and sauces)—but beautifully, tenderly steamed white chicken in its juice, with ginger, Hoisin and chili sauces. Then there is a cavalcade of fire pot dishes, served in black glazed clay pots that keep the contents warm throughout the meal. Monk Chop Suey is vegetarian, including tofu squares, crisp broccoli and broccoli flowers, mushrooms and, unexpectedly, *sotanghon*. Tiger prawns in broth, with noodles and fat chicken-mushroom wontons, make one blink and wonder how perfection was orchestrated so smoothly.

> It's quite a contrast to the old, beloved 'panciteria' or even to its brethren, the North Park noodle houses

Lechon Macau, or barbecued pork belly, is skin-crisp long after it has come out of the kitchen. It can also appear with eggplant and a shrimp paste sauce (*bagoong* by any other name...) in a pot.

Combinations

Noodles (homemade herb, Cantonese and Shanghai styles) come in 16 combinations: with Angsho beef; shiitake mushrooms; boneless white chicken; three kinds of mushrooms; *tausi* spareribs and black *nori*; double pork rib with onion sauce; beef with mushrooms; curry beef

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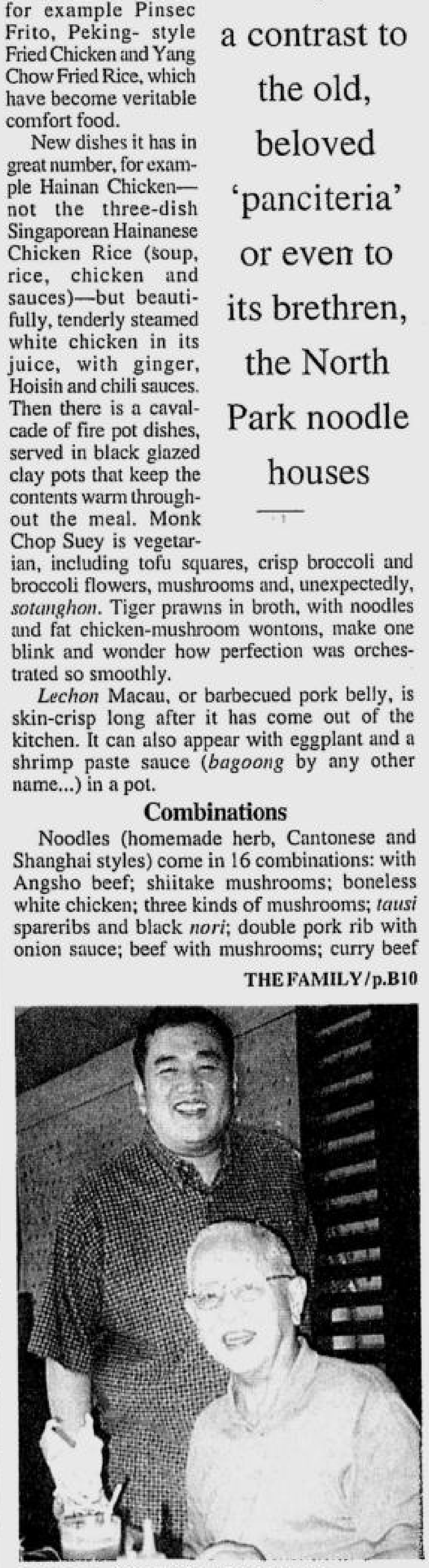
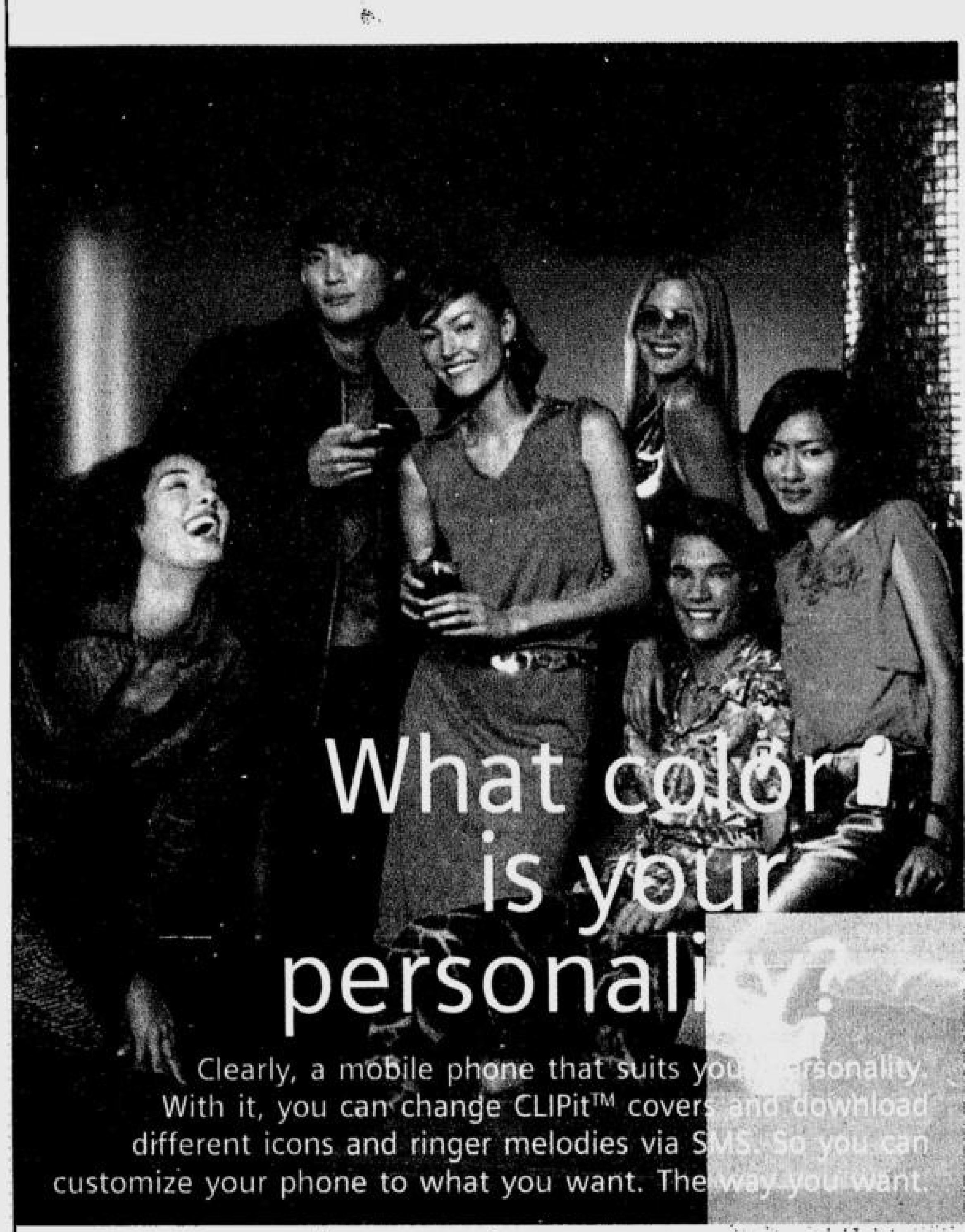


RAFAEL Soon with Ambassador Bienvenido Tan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